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Volume 2, No. 312 © SS 2005 MIDEAST EDITION

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2005

Rebuilding an army

U.S. forces tasked with training Iraqi troops report progress, but no definite end in sight

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Sgt. 1st Class Jacob Stockdill, left, of the 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, talks with an Iraqi trainee near Ad Dulaiyah, Iraq, in November. U.S. trainers have seen a marked improvement in the latest crop of Iraqi soldiers, but a former training commander says the Iraqi force may not be ready for five to 10 years, meaning a longer stay for U.S. troops.

STEVE LIEWER/Stars and Stripes

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News Tracker ... What's new with old news

World

Milosevic's popularity grows: The popularity of former President Slobodan Milosevic has surged in Serbia largely because the democratic authorities who toppled him in 2000 have failed to meet popular expectations, an opinion poll suggested Thursday.

Nearly 34 percent of Serbs now think positively of Milosevic, compared to about 20 percent in April 2002 and 29 percent in September last year, according to the survey conducted by the independent Faktor Plus polling agency.

The head of the agency, said that the surge in Milosevic's popularity — who was ousted from power in a popular revolt in October 2000 — can be attributed to the failure of his successors to create better living for a majority of Serbs.

Germany visa scandal: Germany's parliament opened hearings Thursday in Berlin into allegations that visa rules for which Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer has accepted "political responsibility" encouraged an influx of criminals and women who were forced into prostitution.

Fischer was expected to testify in the inquiry, which could undermine his standing as Germany's most popular politician.

Opposition conservatives charge that German diplomats in eastern Europe, notably in Ukraine, gave many visas without background checks under a 2000 policy directive from Fischer's ministry.

Togo's leadership questioned: Togo's new military-installed president flew to Nigeria on Thursday for talks with President Olusegun Obasanjo, who is leading regional efforts to reverse the Togolese leader's army-backed succession to power. Faure Gnassingbe was immediately ushered into town in a helicopter upon his arrival, minus any of the ceremonies normally accorded a visiting head of state.

Togo's military announced Gnassingbe's appointment to the presidency on Feb. 5, hours after his father — 38-year Togo ruler Gnassingbe Eyadema — died of a heart attack.

Pakistan PM attack: Pakistani police said Thursday they are holding a suspected Islamic militant in connection with last year's failed suicide attack against the country's prime minister.

Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz survived the attack when a suicide bomber blew himself up near his car on July 30 in Faten Jang, a town in the district of Attock, near the capital. Nine people, including Aziz's driver, died in the attack.

On Thursday, Zafar Iqbal, police chief in Attock, told The Associated Press by phone that they are holding a man named Salman "for playing a key role in the attack" against Aziz, but he would not elaborate.

Nepal political crisis: King Gyanendra on Thursday announced the formation of an anti-graft commission that will give broad powers to investigate and jail corrupt politicians and government bureaucrats under Nepal's sweeping state of emergency. Amnesty International, meanwhile, warned Thursday that the king's moves were destroying human rights and taking the country to the "brink of disaster" — a charge the government denies.

The group's secretary general, Irene Khan, called on donor nations to pressure military aid to Nepal's government to pressure it to change its policies.

Tsunami recovery: A powerful earthquake sent tsunami survivors fleeing from buildings in Indonesia's hard-hit Aceh province on Thursday, while Australia said its helicopters will soon turn home as the focus of relief efforts shifts from emergency aid to rebuilding.



Russia school seizure: A man carries an injured child who escaped from a seized school in Beslan, North Ossetia, on Sept. 3, 2004. Parents of children killed in the seizure renewed calls for the resignation of the regional President Alexander Dzasokhov on Thursday, saying the government is rife with corruption and bribery, and warning of repeat terror attacks.

In Banda Aceh, the devastated capital of Indonesia's worst-affected Aceh province, efforts to pull corpses from the debris continue alongside signs that the city is coming back to life: plots cleared to rebuild houses, markets filled with produce and customers, hotels and cafes reopened.

Thursday's quake was the latest in a series of aftershocks that have hit the region since the 9.0-magnitude earthquake on Dec. 26 triggered the tsunami. There were no immediate reports of injury or damage.

Alleged terror chief trial: Alleged terror chief Abu Bakar Bashir told a court in Jakarta, Indonesia, on Thursday he was being framed by President George W. Bush for supporting Islam and that he had nothing to do with a string of deadly bombings in Indonesia.

Bashir, the alleged leader of the al-Qaida-linked terror group Jamaah Islamiyah, is charged with inspiring his followers to carry out the Bali and J.W. Marriott hotel bombings.

Prosecutors have asked a court to sentence him to eight years in jail — far short of the maximum death penalty allowed under Indonesian law.

States

Jackson hospitalized: Michael Jackson was recovering from flu symptoms and was in good spirits after a short hospital stay that prompted another delay in his child molestation trial, a doctor said.

The pop star returned to his Neverland ranch in California on Wednesday after spending a night at the hospital, according to Jackson spokeswoman Raymone K. Bain.

"Mr. Jackson continues to be in stable condition and remains under observation at this time. He continues to need care for some persistent viral symptoms, but otherwise he's in good spirits," said Dr. Todd Bailey, medical director of emergency services at Mariani Medical Center.

Elizabeth Smart kidnappings: The drifter and self-proclaimed prophet accused of kidnapping Elizabeth Smart was removed from his competency hearing twice for singing a religious song — the third time he has done that in court in recent months.

Brian David Mitchell, 51, and his wife, Wanda Barzee, 59, are charged with kidnapping, sexual assault and burglary in the

2002 abduction of the teenager.

Mitchell was removed from the Salt Lake City courtroom Wednesday when he sang, "Who's on the Lord's side? Who's in the time to show."

Judge Judith Atherton allowed the competency hearing to continue without Mitchell.

Florida election laws: The Florida secretary of state's office Wednesday proposed changing election law to give voters more privacy at polling sites — and give anyone who cast provisional ballots a week, instead of two days, to prove their eligibility.

The measures would also establish the secretary — the current officeholder is Republican Glenda Hood — as the ultimate referee when disputes arise from different interpretations of election law by county supervisors.

The proposals appear to give the secretary sweeping powers and could create a showdown with the 67 county supervisors.

Right-to-life case: Family and supporters of a severely brain-damaged woman at the center of a right-to-die case kicked off a protest and lobbying campaign to block removal — perhaps by next week — of a feeding tube that helps keep the woman alive.

With legal options dwindling, the parents of Terri Schiavo, Bob and Mary Schindler, have turned to the founder of the anti-abortion group Operation Rescue, Randall Terry, who said he would again lobby Gov. Jeb Bush to intervene.

The U.S. Supreme Court has already declined to step in and keep Schiavo hooked to a feeding tube.

War on terrorism

Gitmo prisoner torture claim: An Australian terror suspect freed from Guantanamo Bay last month was reportedly tortured during his detention, a leading psychiatrist said Wednesday after examining him.

Egyptian-born Mamdouh Habib was released without charge from the U.S. military base in Cuba last month more than three years after his arrest in Pakistan in 2001. Habib claimed he was sent to Egypt, where he was tortured daily for six months before arriving at Guantanamo Bay in 2002.

Prof. Christopher Tennant, head of psychiatric medicine at Sydney University in Australia, said he examined Habib soon after he returned home to Sydney.

Stories and photos from the Associated Press

Iraqi commission certifies election results

BY CHRIS TOMLINSON

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — The Iraqi people have elected a new democratic parliament, the first in 50 years, but a new government is unlikely to take over for weeks, officials said Thursday.

Iraq's electoral commission certified the results of the country's Jan. 30 elections on Thursday, and Shiite political parties hold the majority of seats, as expected.

But wrangling over who will become prime minister may take days or even weeks to resolve, several people close to the talks said.

The clergy-backed United Iraqi Alliance won 140 seats, giving it a slight majority in the 275-member parliament. But a two-thirds majority — or 182 seats — is needed to confirm the next president, two vice presidents, the prime minister and his cabinet.

All Hashim al-Youshaa, one of the alliance's leaders, said the coalition has recruited eight lawmakers from other political parties to join their block in parliament, and that talks were underway to recruit many more to reach the two-thirds majority needed.

There is no timetable for convening the new National Assembly and the current government will work with the incoming lawmakers to set a date to convene. But even once the assembly meets, there is no deadline for appointing a largely ceremonial president and two vice presidents, who will in turn appoint the prime minister.

Most observers don't expect the assembly to appoint the president until there is consensus on who will be prime minister and who will be in the cabinet, because once the president is appointed, a prime minister must be named within two weeks.

The two leading candidates to be the alliance's nominee are interim Vice President Ibrahim al-Jaafari and Iraqi National Congress leader Ahmad Chalabi. But current Prime Minister Ayad Allawi, whose secular party won 40 seats, insists he is still in the running as a compromise candidate.



Kurdish supporters speed through the streets waving Kurdish flags and brandishing portraits of Kurdish leader Massoud Barzani as they celebrate a strong electoral result, in Kirkuk, Iraq, after results for the Iraqi general election were announced. Wrangling over who will become prime minister is delaying the new government from taking over in Iraq.

Iraqis upbeat, but doubts remain

By PATRICK QUINN

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — People across Iraq generally welcomed the official results Thursday of their first democratic elections, although there were lingering concerns about the future course of the country under a coalition government backed by the Shiite clergy.

Despite the concerns, many people saw Thursday's official certification of the Jan. 30 election results as the first step toward democracy and stability.

"We have had enough of conflicts and disputes. It is time for us to turn to our wounded Iraq and to leave aside the conflicts concerning posts and who will take them," said Qassem Khalfi, a 40-year-old driver from the southern city of Babel.

He was referring to the ongoing talks between the four major parties that emerged from the elections

with enough seats to bargain for the post of prime minister — the man who will govern Iraq.

The Shiite clergy-backed United Iraqi Alliance took 48 percent of the vote for the National Assembly, the Kurdish alliance took 26 percent and Prime Minister Ayad Allawi, a secular Shiite who supported strong ties to Washington, won 14 percent. Parties representing Sunni Arabs got just a handful of votes. Sunni Arabs, Kurds and other ethnic origins represent 40 percent of the population.

After it convenes, the 275-member assembly will elect a president and two vice presidents who will in turn name the prime minister.

Assa Ahmed, a Kurd from Kirkuk, said the most important outcome was that Iraq made its first step forward.

"Whatever the results are, if either Shiites or Sunnis or Kurds were the winners, I have no problem. The most important issue for me is that Iraq moves one step forward toward democracy," Ahmed said.

U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Wednesday, Feb. 16, at least 1,470 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. At least 1,113 died as a result of hostile action, according to the Defense Department. The figures include four military civilians.

The AP count is 11 higher than the Defense Department's tally, last updated at 10 a.m. Wednesday.

The British military has reported 86 deaths; Italy, 20; Ukraine, 18; Poland, 16; Spain, 11; Bulgaria, seven; Slovakia, three; Estonia, Thailand and the Netherlands, two each; and Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary, Latvia and Kazakhstan one death each.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 1,332 U.S. military members have died, according to AP's count. That includes at least 1,004 deaths resulting from hostile action, according to the military's numbers.

The latest deaths reported by the military:

■ Two soldiers died in a vehicle accident Wednesday in Iraq's Babil province.

■ A soldier died of a non-combat injury Wednesday at a base near Tikrit.

■ A soldier died in a vehicle accident Wednesday in Iraq's Diyala province.

■ A soldier died in a vehicle accident Wednesday near Balad.

■ A soldier was killed Tuesday during security operations in Iraq's Anbar province.

The latest identifications reported by the military:

■ No identifications reported.

Ads in Pakistan make fresh appeal for bin Laden leads

The Associated Press

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan — A television and radio campaign offering a \$25 million reward for information leading to the capture of Osama bin Laden hit the airwaves in Pakistan this week in a U.S.-government funded drive to get fresh leads about the al-Qaida leader.

The 30-second television spot flashes photographs of bin Laden and 13 other top terrorist suspects, including his deputy Ayman al-Zawahiri and Taliban leader Mullah Omar, with an emotional appeal for help in bringing them to justice.

"Who are the people who are suffering from terrorism? Our mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, sons and daughters! Who are those terrorists? And who can stop them? Only you!" a voice appeals in the Urdu language.

New campaign is the first time United States has used TV in its search for al-Qaida suspects

The spot makes no direct reference to the U.S. government, a reflection of continued resentment of the United States by many in this Islamic nation of 150 million, despite close official ties between Islamabad and Washington in the war on terror.

The campaign is an upshot of counter-terrorist rewards legislation authored by Rep. Mark Kirk, a Republican from Illinois.

The measure also gave President Bush the option to double the reward for the al-Qaida chief to \$50 million.

Three years after the Sept. 11 attacks killed nearly 3,000 people, bin Laden's trail has gone cold.

Tens of thousands of Pakistani troops and 17,000 U.S. forces in Afghanistan have

drawn a blank, though officials still presume the al-Qaida leader is probably hiding in the rugged mountains between the two countries.

The U.S. government has publicized rewards for al-Qaida and Taliban suspects before — on posters, matchbox covers, newspaper ads, the Internet and even with leaflets scattered from the air in Pakistan's tribal regions.

This is the first time they've used TV.

Gregory Crouch, spokesman at the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad, said the TV messages in Urdu, Sindhi, Baluchi and Pashtu languages will run on state and private television and state radio for an initial period of six weeks.

A contact phone number and e-mail address is provided, and promises confidentiality and resettlement for informants and their families.

An embassy official said on condition of anonymity that ads that began appearing in Pakistani newspapers in early January have yielded about 25 calls, which he declined to characterize, other than to say that some had been useful.

The initial response to the television messages, however, was cool among the viewers who spoke to the Associated Press.

"It's useless," said a 30-year-old Muhammad Arshad, a bearded shopkeeper who saw the TV spot with friends at home in Peshawar. He said the ad was too brief for people to take in and was unnecessary anyway.

"Everyone knows what Osama looks like anyway. People even name their babies after him ... The reward isn't new. It's been around for years."

Training Iraqi troops is slow going for U.S.

Some say effort may take decade

BY TERRY BOYD
Stars and Stripes

FORWARD OPERATING BASE DANGER, Iraq — Two years after it disbanded Saddam Hussein's military, the U.S. Army is trying to build a new Iraqi army.

The sooner that fledgling army can take care of itself and protect its country, the sooner U.S. troops can go home, military leaders said.

But don't pack your bags yet. U.S. trainers say American soldiers could be in Iraq for the next decade, a sobering assessment of a fragmented, though rapidly evolving, effort.

"It's a five-to-10-year solution," said 1st Sgt. J. T. Brown. Until last month, Brown was the commander and a trainer at The Island — technically the 4th Iraqi Army Division Training Academy — a training facility near Tikrit.

It will be years before the new army will have the skills or the leadership to lift the security burden off U.S. troops, trainers said. But the situation is improving.

The Iraqi soldiers who graduated from The Island last month were some of the best U.S. trainers have seen, said Brown and Sgt. 1st Class Kenneth Taylor, who also worked as a trainer.

Training at The Island includes basic soldiering skills, such as marksmanship, weapons care and maintenance. Marksmanship is a large portion, said Maj. Gen. John R.S. Batiste, 1st Infantry Division commander general in an interview Sunday.

"We've established marksmanship standards (for recruits) ... and we've gotten millions and millions of rounds of ammunition," Batiste said. Recruits are learning "to fire three aimed rounds versus 300 sprayed over the top of a wall, which is what they were doing," Batiste said.

Some combat techniques, such as how to lay down suppressing fire or cover fire, are also taught. But unlike at U.S. Army boot camp, U.S. trainers at The Island devote much of their time trying to undo ethnic and religious tensions, the residue of Saddam's corrupt, divide-and-rule culture.

Trainers throw together Sunnis, Shiites and Kurds, and it takes recruits time to get comfortable with one another.

"We have the periodic nosebleed, but by the end of the week, they're hugging each other ... after working as a team," Brown said.

In addition, trainers try to teach things such as rules of engagements, civil rights, laws of war and ethics.

The Island is one of perhaps a dozen training operations across Iraq, but programs are not standardized.

"Everyone is teaching different things," said Maj. Donald McArdle, with the 42nd Infantry Division.



Above left: An Iraqi recruit wraps himself in the new colors of the 4th Iraqi Division last month during a graduation ceremony at Forward Operating Base Danger.

Above right: Graduating Iraqi troops showed a lot of energy but not much polish during the ceremony. It remains to be seen, say American officers and trainers, if Iraqis can transform themselves into an effective fighting force.

Left: A recruit from the 203rd Iraqi National Guard Battalion practices his marksmanship drills at a base near Ad Duluiyah, Iraq, under the guidance of instructors from the 1st Infantry Division's 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment.

ABOVE LEFT AND RIGHT: PHOTOS BY TERRY BOYD/Stars and Stripes
LEFT: STEVE LEWIS/Stars and Stripes

Recruits — many uneducated men from rural areas — often are told training would last two weeks instead of four, and that they can go home in the afternoons, Brown said.

Trainers worry soldiers motivated by money, not pride in the country, "may not give 100 percent effort in training which ... may cost them their lives in combat," Brown added.

Plus, the recruits who do turn into "super, squared-away soldiers" end up in Iraqi units with no real non-commissioned officer corps and no chain of command — an environment that sometimes punishes rather than encourages initiative, Brown said.

Despite all the start-up glitches, the trainers agree they're seeing steady progress.

There are plans for advanced NCO training comparable to Primary Leadership Development Course. But there is nothing similar to large-scale field exercises such as the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif.

Much is left up to American units who coach and mentor the Iraqi soldiers as they integrate into units fighting alongside U.S. troops.

With limited time resources and training infrastructure, trainers at The Island have to settle for producing "the best soldiers we can," Brown said. That's not merely the new policy mandate out of Washington, trainers say.

"That's the only hope for the future of this country," Brown said. "The future of Iraq is right here."

E-mail Terry Boyd at: boydtd@mid.estripes.osd.mil

Finding stability, good leadership

BY TERRY BOYD
Stars and Stripes

FORWARD OPERATING BASE DANGER, Iraq — First they were the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps. They didn't fight. Then they were the Iraqi National Guard. They didn't fight.

U.S. officials are now hoping the third time is the charm, with the goal of Iraqis taking the lead on security — and American troops in the background — as the focus turns to standardizing training across the country.

Lt. Gen. David Patreus, former 101st Airborne Division commander, is NATO Training Mission Iraq commander, in charge of standardizing training and establishing advanced training institutions, including an Iraqi War College.

Recent developments include: ■ On Jan. 6, the traditional Iraqi Army Day, U.S. officials stood up nine divisions across central and northern Iraq, from Tikrit to Kirkuk to Sulimaniyah. Under the Iraqi army structure, a full division is about 15,600 men, and a battalion is 896 soldiers, similar to the U.S. Army, said Maj. Steve Maranian, Iraqi Security Forces coordinator for the Würzburg, Germany-based 1st Infantry Division.

■ As of January, there were about 56,000 Iraqis in military forces organized into 90 battalions across Iraq, according to Department of Defense documents.

■ In the 1st ID's area of responsibility, the number of battalions increased to 20 from eight or 10 when the division arrived a year ago, Maranian said.

■ At a facility near Tikrit, between 300 and 350 Iraqi soldiers graduate every 28 days, or about three battalions in one year.

■ Smaller training centers in Iraq and Jordan graduate from 50 to 100 soldiers a month, U.S. officials say.

Materially, the situation has improved over the



TERRY BOYD/Stars and Stripes

Finding dependable leadership is the most difficult part of building the new Iraqi army, says Maj. Gen. John R.S. Batiste, right. Commander of the new 4th Iraqi Division Lt. Gen. Abdul Rahman Aziz al-Mufti, shaking hands with Batiste on Jan. 26, is an example of the best of the emerging leadership, Batiste said.

past few months. Iraqi soldiers are getting body armor, weapons, communications equipment and trucks, said Maj. Gen. John R.S. Batiste, 1st ID commander. Iraqi soldiers say — and Batiste agreed — that communications equipment is essential for the new army.

"Do they need more? Absolutely," Batiste said in an interview Sunday, just before the 1st ID transferred its sector to the New York-based 42nd Infantry Division.

Army officials say the Iraqi army is improving steadily and some units, such as the 205nd Battalion, fought well at Samarra last fall. The key to transforming the Iraqi force is improving leadership, Batiste and Maranian said.

American commanders have replaced unsatisfactory officers and some soldiers, "but that's the exception, not the rule," Maranian said.

Lt. Gen. Abdul Rahman Aziz al-Mufti, commander of the new 4th Iraqi Division based in Tikrit, is an example of the best of the emerging Iraqi military leadership, Batiste said.

"He seems to be a hell of a guy," Batiste added. E-mail Terry Boyd at: boydtd@mid.estripes.osd.mil

Beating death

WACO, Texas — A man pleaded guilty to the beating death of a 2-year-old and sexually assaulting the girl and her sister at Fort Hood while their mother was serving in Iraq.

John Dale Mayer Jr., 30, will face life in prison without the possibility of parole because the government opted not to pursue the death penalty, said Assistant U.S. Attorney Mark Frazier.

Sentencing was set for April. Mayer was set for trial this month in Waco's federal court but pleaded guilty Wednesday to first-degree murder and two aggravated sexual assault charges. As part of the agreement, prosecutors dropped two additional assault charges.

Iraqi girl gets surgery

PORTLAND, Maine — An Iraqi girl who was born with a heart defect is coming to Maine as early as Thursday to receive medical treatment.

The 5-year-old girl captured the hearts of the Utah Army National Guard 115th Engineering Group, which was stationed near her home in southern Iraq. The soldiers arranged for her to come to the United States to have a hole in her heart repaired.

Noor Abd Al-Hadi Hassan and her father were traveling to Portland, where surgery was to be performed by Dr. Reed Quinn from Maine Heart Surgical Associates.

Any care provided by Quinn and his colleagues will be free, said Rick Morrone, chief executive officer of Maine Heart Surgical Associates.

From The Associated Press

Attack on U.S. convoy hurts 7 Iraqis

BY TODD PITMAN

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Insurgents detonated a bomb Thursday as a convoy of U.S. troops and Iraqi National Guardsmen traveled on a northern road, wounding seven Iraqi troops, an Iraqi commander said.

The attack occurred in Hawija, on the main road running north to Kirkuk, said Maj. Gen. Anwar Mohammad Amin.

Meanwhile, a Swedish citizen kidnapped in Iraq appeared in a video with a gun pointed at his head, appealing to the Pope and Sweden's king to help bring about his release from insurgents, Swedish media reported.

On the main highway north of Baghdad, attackers targeting a U.S. convoy set off a car bomb about 25 miles south of the capital, damaging one vehicle but causing no casualties, a police official said on condition of anonymity.

Three Iraqis were wounded when American troops opened fire to disperse a crowd following the explosion, police said. U.S. officials could not immediately be reached for comment.

In western Baghdad, Iraqi and U.S. forces launched a joint raid, detaining seven suspected insurgents, Interior Ministry Capt. Sabah Yasin said.

Also Thursday, gunmen opened fire on patroling U.S. National Guard troops in Hillah, 60 miles south of the capital, sparking a gunfight that killed two suspected insurgents, Maj. Fatik Ilyd



U.S. Army 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment officers and a masked Iraqi interpreter, left, question an Iraqi boy on Thursday while investigating a series of roadside bombs that happened Wednesday in Mosul. Two other roadside bombs detonated near Baghdad and Kirkuk on Thursday as Army convoys passed.

said. Three Iraqi guardsmen were wounded in clash.

A group calling itself "Martyr of al-Isawi Brigades" said it kidnapped the Swede of Iraqi descent as he traveled from Mosul to Baghdad earlier this month.

Part of the video, which was aired by Swedish broadcaster SVT, showed al-Yousfi sitting on his knees, with the barrel of an AK-47 rifle pointed at the side of his head as he spoke in Arabic.

Al-Yousfi is the purported leader of the Christian Democratic Party in Iraq, which did not participate in Iraq's Jan. 30 elections. Sweden's Foreign Ministry confirmed that he was kidnapped, but had no comment about the videotape.

Late Wednesday in western Baghdad, security guards for Shiite Muslim worshippers shot dead a man they said was readying to detonate an explo-

sive-laden belt he was wearing, police Capt. Talib Thahir said.

The Shiites were celebrating the Islamic holy month of Muharram.

Ashtura, the 10th day of Muharram and the holiest day of the Shiite Muslim calendar, falls on Saturday this year and marks the death of Imam Hussein, the grandson of the prophet Muhammad, in a 7th century battle for leadership of the Islamic world.

Human rights group links 'Chemical Ali' to Shiite massacres

BY CHRIS TOMLINSON

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Recently gathered information links one of Saddam Hussein's most notorious former generals to the massacres of Shiites in southern Iraq and could result in new charges against the man who allegedly ordered the use of poisonous gas against Kurds in the north, a human rights group said Thursday.

Gen. Ali Hassan al-Majid, known as "Chemical Ali," was involved in the massacre of at least 34 Shiite Muslim men in the southern city of Basra in 1999, New York-based Human Rights Watch said in a new report.

"Al-Majid's role in the genocide against the Kurds is well-known, but it appears his hands are dirty in Basra in 1999 as well," Joe Stork, director of the group's Middle East and North Africa division, said in a statement.

Investigators interviewed victims, family members and eyewitnesses, and also examined documents and evidence from mass graves, the group said.

Human Rights Watch obtained a handwritten list that named 120 young men executed from March to May 1999 for taking part in protests over the assassination of Grand Ayatollah Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr, a senior Shiite cleric.

The remains of 34 men were found in a mass grave in May 2003, and family members have identified 29 of them.

Among the documents found by the group is an apparent execution list, which names 120 men who were executed by the "order of the Commander of the Southern Sector," a post held by al-Majid at the time. Al-Majid earned his nickname for allegedly ordering the use of poisonous gas against minority Kurds in northern Iraq, a crime with which he has been charged by an Iraqi court.

In the same statement, Human Rights Watch expressed concern that authorities were not respecting al-Majid's civil rights to a year of interrogations during which he had no access to a defense attorney.



Gen. Ali Hassan al-Majid

"The alleged crimes are so serious, it's very important to get these trials right," Stork said. "The Iraqi Special Tribunal must be independent of political pressure and adhere to international standards."

On Dec. 14, interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi said trials against the top figures in Saddam Hussein's ousted regime would begin within a week, but no trials have begun.

Other officials have said trials would not even start before 2006 because the U.S.-funded Special Tribunal, needing more time to train judges and prosecutors and organize stacks of evidence, is not yet prepared to begin.

Closing arguments start in British Iraq abuse trial

BY MATT SURMAN

The Associated Press

OSNABRUECK, Germany — Prosecutors began their closing arguments Thursday at the court-martial of three British soldiers being tried for alleged abuses in Iraq, saying the men were not scapegoats in a case that caused dismay in Britain.

The three Royal Regiment of Fusiliers soldiers have been on trial since Jan. 18 at a British base in western Germany. Cpl. Daniel Kenyon, 33; Lance Cpl. Mark Cooley, 25; and Lance Cpl. Darren Larkin, 30, face charges that they abused Iraqi civilians suspected of looting a humanitarian aid warehouse outside Basra in May 2003.

The camp's commander has sought to portray the defendants as rogue soldiers who without his knowledge went beyond his order to capture looters and "work them hard" as a deterrent. But defense lawyers have argued that his instructions were vague and invited misunderstanding, and that he encouraged an undisciplined atmosphere.

"The prosecution does not ask you to convict anyone to find a scapegoat," prosecutor Lt. Col.

Nick Clapham told the court he was summing up his case.

"They may have been looting, but they were looters in the protection of the British army and the fact that we failed is not an issue in this case," Clapham said. "Part of that failure stems from the actions of Cpl. Kenyon and Lance Cpl. Cooley."

Cooley faces charges of lifting a detainee on a forklift and driving it, and with simulating a punch against another detainee.

He has pleaded not guilty. Kenyon, 33, has also pleaded not guilty to aiding and abetting the abuse of detained looters and failing to report it.

The third defendant, Larkin, has already pleaded guilty to one count of battery, acknowledging he was the man shown in a photo standing with both feet on a tied-up Iraqi lying on the ground.

The court-martial revolves around photos taken by another soldier, who was arrested in England after bringing the film to be developed. The pictures provoked widespread dismay in Britain after they were published in newspapers, leading to uncomfortable comparisons with the scandal over abuse of Iraqi prisoners by U.S. soldiers at the Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad.

Navy adds to bonuses re-enlistment jobs

By SANDRA JONTZ

Stars and Stripes

The U.S. Navy added seven ratings to its extensive list of jobs for which sailors can collect the Selective Re-enlistment Bonus if they commit to stay Navy.

Added to the list of 70 ratings are quartermaster, cryptologic technician technical, engine room, damage controlman, hull technician and some aviation boatwain's mate ratings. Some of the bonuses are tied to how long the sailor has been in the Navy.

Eligibility in the newly added ratings was effective Feb. 1.

While the maximum payout for the added ratings is a \$45,000 bonus for a six-year commitment, not all sailors who re-enlist will qualify for the top payout, said Lt. Kyle Raines, Navy Personnel Command spokesman.

"Two [cryptologists] might get slightly

different bonuses based on when they came in, what their current pay is, and the multiple for that rating," Raines said, referring to a figure assigned to each rating and zone that personnel officials use to calculate bonus payouts.

The complete list of eligible ratings and the "multiple" by which officials calculate payouts is posted on the Navy Web site at: www.npc.navy.mil/ReferenceLibrary/Messages/NAVADMIN

Additions to bonus program

The Navy has added seven ratings to its Selective Re-enlistment Bonus program. Some of the bonuses are tied to the amount of time sailors are in the Navy.

Zone A are sailors with less than six years of service; zone B between six and 10 years of service; zone C from 10 to 14 years of service.

The re-enlistments:
Quartermasters in zones A, B and C
Cryptologic technician technical, zones B and C
Aviation boatwain's mate fuel, zone A
Engine room, zone A
Engine room, zone A
Damage controlman, zone A
Hull technicians, zone A

Ns/Message Details/020/05.htm.

Re-enlistment bonuses provide incentive for sailors, said Petty Officer 2nd Class Heidi Davis, 32, a cryptologist assigned to the USS La Salle, the former flagship of the Navy's 6th Fleet.

The bonuses make the targeted work forces stronger by letting "the Navy hang on to people with the skills and experience, and motivates others to get training and be an asset to the

Navy as well," said Davis, a sailor for nearly six years.

On the flip side, the Navy has eliminated some jobs that once qualified for the SRB and decreased the bonus payout levels for 31 others, Raines said.

The decreases go into effect March 3, so sailors eligible to re-enlist will want to do so now before the payouts decrease next month, he said.

"The SRB program is another example of our Human Capital Strategy's aim to ensure we have the right sailors, with the right skills, in the right jobs and this program helps us achieve that goal," the chief of naval personnel, Vice Adm. Gerry Hoewing, said in a statement. "It is a flexible incentive for the Navy to encourage retention in ratings where skilled sailors are needed and in turn provides those sailors with greater financial compensation."

E-mail Sandra Jontz at: jontzs@mail.espressosd.mil

New program gives some sailors early-out option

By JON R. ANDERSON

Stars and Stripes

ARLINGTON, Va. — The Navy has approved a new early-out option for many sailors due to get out of the service before Oct. 1.

The "Early Transition Program" allows certain sailors to leave the Navy, but they must go by Aug. 15, said Master Chief Petty Officer Doug DeVault, an early-out program manager for Navy's chief of personnel.

Sailors whose active contract ends before Oct. 1, the start of the military's new fiscal year, are eligible to apply, said DeVault. It could shave as much as six

months off of contracts for those who apply now.

The program expands an existing policy that allows sailors to leave the Navy, with their commander's permission, as much as 90 days early.

Traditionally, early-out requests must be linked to set of approved reasons, such plans to go to college. That's not so with the new policy. Sailors don't need a reason, but their boss still has to give the OK.

Unit commanders will still be able to disapprove requests, he said, but even if the commander approves, final approval rests with Navy headquarters.

Sailors in a few specialties, however, are not eligible, DeVault said. Excluded are:

- Specialties with Selective Re-enlistment Bonus. "If a sailor is SRB eligible or currently drawing an SRB, we're not letting them go. That's a critical skill and we need those people to stick around," DeVault said.

- Special Operations. SEALs, Explosive Ordnance Disposal experts, Special Surface Warfare Combatant Crewman and divers are not eligible.

- No Nukes. Anyone with a rating in nuclear propulsion systems is not eligible.

- Stop-loss ratings. While the

Navy currently has no specialties affected by stop loss, officials "throw this in as a catch-all, in case we do have another stop loss," DeVault said.

Commanders who sign off on requests likely won't see that sailor's replacement quickly.

"The CO has to agree to gap the billet up until the sailor projected rotation date or their [end of active service obligation date]," DeVault said.

The new policy follows a similar extended transition program offered last year that saw some 1,250 sailors get out a few months early. Because last year's offering included sailors with end-of-ser-

vices dates that went into this year, many that might have been interested have already signed up, he said.

Officials estimate about 500 sailors will take advantage of the new program. "But that's by no means a quota," he added.

The early out offering also comes as the Navy is preparing to cut its force levels by 13,000 sailors next year. Officials hope it will help start whittling down those numbers now.

"As we get smaller, the jobs go away. If the member is in an excess billet out there, there's really no sense in him sticking around," DeVault said.

E-mail Jon R. Anderson at: anderson@mail.espressosd.mil

Hagee: Cultural training needed to deal with globally funded insurgents

By LEO SHANE III

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — U.S. service members in Iraq need more training — especially cultural training — to deal with a globally funded and highly sophisticated insurgency, the Marine Corps commandant told lawmakers Thursday.

The comments came as Navy and Marine officials outlined to Congress their 2006 budget requests, which includes more funding for troops' training and almost doubles bonuses for individuals with language skills. Those start at \$100 a month for active duty personnel.

Marine Corps Commandant Gen. Michael Hagee said little has changed in the combat tactics and physical demands of fighting insurgents over the years. But to more effectively anticipate their movements and plans, a new emphasis is placed on understanding their motives and background.

"The [insurgents] today are globalized. They are able to coordinate worldwide, able to communicate worldwide and raise money worldwide," he said. "That's sig-



Gen. Michael Hagee

nificantly different than in the interwar period between World War I and World War II."

Over the last five years, the Army and Navy have placed a greater emphasis on education, both before and after troops enter the service.

Hagee said about 97 percent of Marines are high school graduates, and new efforts are under

way to provide them with more continuing education opportunities, both at home and while deployed.

Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Vern Clark reiterated plans to recruit higher-educated sailors because of the ever increasing complexity of the Navy's systems.

"I've told our people we're not competing against the Marines or the Army or the Air Force for people. We're actually competing against Fortune 500 companies that want the same kind of people we want," he said. "We've told our people, 'If you're going to get promoted, you're going to have to have degrees.'"

Gordon England, secretary of the Navy, admitted the service "probably started too late" in emphasizing the importance of education in its servicemenbers, but he is pleased with recent efforts to change that attitude.

The Navy's proposed \$125.6 billion budget, up \$6.4 billion from last year, also includes proposals to reduce the carrier fleet from 12 to 11 ships and reduce submarine production next year from two to one.

E-mail Leo Shane at: shane@stripes.osd.mil

Time for benefits



World War II merchant marines who hauled troops, tanks, fuel and other wartime supplies to allied forces abroad are lobbying for a law that would give them \$1,000 monthly compensation until they die.

One of them, Frank Medeiros, 83, points last week to certificates in his Fremont, Calif., home, that he received as a merchant marine. Medeiros said he was paid \$3,000 as a 19-year-old merchant marine sailor in 1943 for what had been billed as a four-month convey to supply Russian troops at Murmansk. The round-trip run lasted 13 months. Two dozen of the convey's 33 merchant ships were lost in attacks along the way.

Leaving gear behind leaves units short

Guard, Reserve troops face long wait for equipment after deployment

BY JON R. ANDERSON

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Reserve and National Guard units that leave equipment behind in Iraq and Afghanistan will have to wait more than a year before they get replacement gear, according to the civilian chief of the Reserve components.

Cash to buy the gear is earmarked in the Pentagon's budget request for next year, as well as the supplemental request for this year's war spending, said Tom Hall, assistant Defense Secretary for Reserve Affairs, told a gathering of reporters Thursday in Washington.

Both requests are now being debated in Congress.

If approved, that money will allow units commanders "to start

resetting... the equipment left behind," said Hall.

But even if both requests are approved in short order, it will take 12 to 18 months before the new gear shows up, said Hall. And even then, he added, "there are questions about whether that will be enough."

Most Guard and Reserve units serving in Iraq and Afghanistan have been handing off everything to from trucks and Humvees to tanks and Bradley Fighting Vehicles to follow-on forces.

Hall said the equipment gap between when units return from the war zones and when they are able to begin training again back home is fueling readiness concerns.

"If you leave your equipment in Iraq," said Hall, that means "you

don't have equipment ... to train on."

Asked about the issue during testimony on Capitol Hill, Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. Richard Myers noted the same problem.

"There will be a lag time where units are below the desired levels of readiness," said Myers.

Also, he said, the equipment shuffle complicates Pentagon promises that troops "will train with the equipment they're going to use in country."

Recruiting woes

Meanwhile, said Hall, the majority of the Reserve components are struggling with recruiting efforts.

"The ground truth on where we stand right now, in first four

months of the fiscal year, is that only the Marine Corps Reserve has met its recruiting goals," said Hall.

Hall said he expects the Army Guard and Reserve in particular "will continue to have a challenging year."

The Army National Guard is currently at 95 percent of its authorized strength and the Army Reserve has dipped to 97 percent. To help turn the tide, said Hall, the services have surged an additional 2,300 Guard and Reserve recruits into communities.

Hall said he's also backing efforts to offer new enlistment bonuses for as much as \$15,000.

"If we can get from \$2,400 to \$15,000 I think that could make a bit of difference," said Hall.

E-mail Jon R. Anderson at: anderson-jr@ar.mil

Bound for Afghanistan

MANNHEIM, Germany — The bleachers in the old gymnasium rattled as the crowd rose to join the departing soldiers in a spirited rendition of the Army song.

On Wednesday, members of the 44th Signal Battalion rolled up their guidon at a brief farewell ceremony. About 225 soldiers are deploying to Afghanistan for a yearlong stint.

Wednesday's send-off for the 44th Signal Battalion lacked immediacy. None of the soldiers who participated in the afternoon ceremony left home to catch a flight. Some are to depart as early as this weekend, while others won't leave until late March.

Remember those who have served, or are serving. Col. Jennifer Napper, the brigade commander, said in her remarks to the troops. Though the 44th has been one of the busiest units around, and the road ahead may "become hard and tedious" at times, Napper said the troops would not tire.

From staff reports

The good - and bad - in helping hurt GI's

Red tape traps some vets

BY WES SMITH

The Orlando Sentinel



Soldiers gather Thursday in the processing center of the new Army medical facility on the Air National Guard Base in Birmingham, Ala. The military is seeing benefits to treating injured troops near their homes.

Community-based health care initiative a hit

The Associated Press

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — Sgt. Chris Dunbar was nursing a shattered jaw after fighting in Iraq. Upon arriving at Fort Stewart, Ga., he realized he would be stuck at the base for more than a year until his teeth and mouth fully healed.

What he wished was to go home to recover. The Army agreed.

Through the military's new community-based health care initiative, Dunbar was allowed to return home to Tampa, Fla., where he is being treated by an Air Force doctor and has family help while remaining on active duty.

"This is really a godsend," Dunbar said in a telephone interview with The Associated Press.

The program in Florida is one of five established since January 2004 to serve injured National Guard and Reserve soldiers in 23 states. This month, a center opened in Birmingham, Ala., to evaluate the health care needs of soldiers in Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee and Kentucky.

"The purpose is to allow soldiers to come back to their communities and receive medical care instead of at a military installation," said Alabama Guard spokesman Lt. Col. Bob Horton.

Each center has case workers who evaluate the soldiers' eligibility to return home and a nurse to monitor their progress.

The indefinite nature of the fighting in Iraq,

mounting injuries and multiple returns to combat by Guard and Reserve troops forced the Army to re-evaluate its health care policy, said Lt. Col. Ken Braddock, who oversees the community-based health care programs for most of the eastern states.

Fighting the war against terror is forcing part-time soldiers to take on full-time duties in Iraq. Army officials anticipated that the increasing injuries would surpass capacity at Army installations, though they haven't yet, said Col. Barbara Scherb, who manages the program.

"Initially, that's why the Army looked at a community-based option — to augment the medical capacity," said Scherb, who estimated the administrative costs of the program would reach \$23 million this year. But now the Army is seeing benefits for the treatment of soldiers, as well. Allowing troops to be treated near home can "get them to heal quicker," Braddock said.

To be eligible for the program, soldiers must remain on active duty. While they are treated near home, they also take on a military job so they get out and adjust to living in a civilian environment. Once soldiers have recovered from their injuries, they are released from active duty until their next scheduled mobilization.

Since January 2004, community-based health care centers have been established in Florida, Arkansas, California, Massachusetts, Wisconsin and Alabama.

HINESVILLE, Ga. — Staff Sgt.

Howard LeRoy Hizer made his way back from Iraq with a Bronze Star in November 2003, but he's still fighting to get healthy and get home.

More than a year after the rest of his Florida National Guard unit returned to civilian life, the St. Cloud, Fla., reservist has a drawer full of medications, a Jeep with 265,000 miles on it and a bed in a 16-man trailer on a military base 300 miles from his family.

Hizer, 41, was called to active duty in December 2002 and served 11 months as an infantry-squad leader in the Persian Gulf before being sent to Fort Stewart, Ga., because of severe back and neck injuries.

He was hurt when he fell from a truck on its way to help a military-police unit that had been attacked.

The staff sergeant, an Osceola County volunteer firefighter who works at St. Cloud's wastewater-treatment plant in civilian life, is now into his second year of what the military calls "medical holdover." He gets his military pay and free treatment for his injuries, but except for the time he spends on leave, he can't return to his wife and two young children.

"I'm very frustrated, and I'm beyond frustration," said his wife, Lynette Hizer, a registered nurse.

Col. Barbara Scherb of U.S. Army Forces Command in Allentown, Pa., disclosed last week that at least 15 wounded or injured Iraq veterans who were among the first to arrive at Fort Stewart have been blocked from seeking treatment at home, even though other soldiers in similar circumstances have been allowed to do so.

The bureaucratic knot, which the colonel described as "very complex budgetary and statutory problem all wrapped up in le-

galeses" should be untied by the end of February, the colonel said. She said efforts to untangle the red tape had been going on for a year.

The military spent millions to increase medical staff and to improve living conditions at Fort Stewart and other bases after Iraq's invasion. But the National Guard troops returning from Iraq complained to members of Congress about unequal and poor treatment in Fall 2002.

Last spring, the Army also unveiled a \$23 million Community-Based Health Care Organization to relieve overburdened bases by allowing soldiers such as Hizer to get medical treatment near their homes.

Hizer, whose job is being held open for him by 30 military officials, has petitioned repeatedly to get into the community-care program, but so far his requests have been denied.

"I just want to get fixed so I can go home and pursue my job," he said. "It's almost like they want to wait you out until you say you want to quit and go home."

Currently, 4,850 active-duty Guard and Reserve — of about 4,850 on medical-holdover status nationwide — are in the community-care program.

Hizer and others at Fort Stewart said the medical and labyrinthine process seems more designed to drive soldiers out of the military system.

Former National Guard 1st Lt. Ted Pratchios, 33, of Jacksonville, Fla., said Hizer's platoon leader in Iraq, Pratchios recalled that he recommended Hizer for the Bronze Star based on his cool-headedness and leadership. Hizer, a nine-man squad, often under fire.

"I can't believe he is still at Fort Stewart. It's like guys are being punished for being hurt," Pratchios said. "There is something not working the way it should be there."

IN THE STATES

Appeal in tobacco case

WASHINGTON — The Justice Department said Wednesday it will appeal a court decision barring it from pursuing \$280 billion from tobacco companies in a civil racketeering lawsuit.

The government said it will ask the full U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit to hear the case after a three-judge panel earlier this month said the government could not seek the money. The 2-1 decision from the appeals court dealt a major blow to the government's attempt to hold cigarette makers accountable for decades of alleged deceit about the dangers of smoking.

The panel decided that the 1970 civil racketeering statute under which the government filed its case required forward-looking remedies, which did not include "disgorgement," or the pursuit of \$280 billion the government claims the industry earned through fraudulent activities.

The defendants in the lawsuit are Philip Morris USA and Altia, R.J. Reynolds, Brown & Williamson Tobacco Co., British American Tobacco Ltd., Lorillard Tobacco Co., Liggett Group Inc., Council for Tobacco Research-USA and the Tobacco Institute.

Social Security accounts

WASHINGTON — Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan gave President Bush new authority for changing Social Security by using private accounts a modest endorsement Thursday.

"These accounts properly constructed and managed will create a sense of increased wealth" on the part of middle and lower income workers, Greenspan said in an appearance before the House Banking Committee.

Greenspan, however, expressed fresh concerns about the costs of a transition and the impact on financial markets.

His worry: whether increased government borrowing — needed to help bring the accounts about — would boost a variety of interest rates from mortgage rates for consumers to borrowing costs for every body.

Circuit City plane crashes

PUEBLO, Colo. — Federal investigators said the pilots of a Circuit City corporate jet were battling poor weather just before the plane crashed a few miles from an airport, killing all eight on board.

Though the cause of the Wednesday morning crash was not known, Federal Aviation Administration spokesman Mike Ferguson said the flight crew had been relying on the plane's instruments, which are used when weather doesn't permit visual landings.

Circuit City said four of the victims were employees of the nation's No. 2 consumer electronics chains. The company said it would not release the names of the victims but that none were executives.

Two victims were the pilot, co-pilot and six passengers, Corsentino said. The flight originated in Richmond, Va., home of Circuit City Stores Inc.

Philadelphian baby kidnapping

PHILADELPHIA — A woman pleaded not guilty Wednesday to charges she kidnapped a baby during a 1997 house fire and raised the girl as her own for six years.

Prosecutors have said that 42-year-old Carolyn Correa, desperate for a baby of her own after suffering a miscarriage, conspired to set the blaze and steal the 10-day-old child from her crib.

Correa pleaded no contest to kidnapping, interfering with judicial custody and conspiracy and could get 25 to 50 years in prison.

No sentencing date was. Correa is undergoing psychiatric evaluation. The girl, now 7, did not attend Wednesday's court session.

From The Associated Press

Negroponte named U.S. intel director

By KATHERINE SHRADER

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Bush on Thursday named John Negroponte, a former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations and currently the administration's top representative in Iraq, to be America's first national intelligence director.

Announcing the move, Bush said that Negroponte understands global intelligence because he's had a long career in the foreign service. Bush also said that Negroponte will make decisions on the budgets for the various intelligence agencies.

"John will make sure that those whose duty it is to defend America have the information we need to make the right decisions," the president said.

Bush said Negroponte's office will be outside of the West Wing because it's important that he be apart from the White House.

"Nevertheless, he will have access on a daily basis in that he'll be my primary briefier," Bush said.

Negroponte said if confirmed he plans to "reform of the intelligence community in

ways designed to best meet the intelligence needs of the 21st century."

He called the new job "the most challenging assignment I have undertaken in more than 40 years of government service."

Bush named Lt. Gen. Mike Hayden, who has served as director of the National Security Agency since March 1999, as Negroponte's deputy. He is the longest serving director of the secretive codebreaking agency and has pushed for changes, such as asking longtime agency veterans to retire and increasing reliance on technology contractors.

"If we're going to stop the terrorists before they strike," Bush said, "we must ensure that our intelligence agencies work as a single, unified enterprise."

Discussing the authority that Negroponte will have, Bush said that "people who control the money, people who have access to the president generally have a lot of influence. And that's why John Negroponte is going to have a lot of influence. He will set the budgets."

Negroponte, 65, was at the United Nations when he was tapped to take on the delicate job of transforming the U.S. presence in Iraq from that of an occupier to that of

"He will have access [to me] on a daily basis in that he'll be my primary briefier."

President Bush
on the role of national intelligence director

Defrocked priest guilty in abuse case

By FOSTER KLUG

The Associated Press

BALTIMORE — A defrocked priest was found guilty Thursday of molesting a former altar boy who shot and wounded him on a city street a decade later.

Jurors found that Maurice Blackwell, 58, who did not testify, molested Dontee Stokes, 29, when Blackwell was pastor of St. Edward, a Roman Catholic church in West Baltimore.

The jury convicted Blackwell of three of four counts, finding he abused Stokes in 1989, 1991 and 1992 but acquitting him of a charge relating to an alleged incident in 1989 when Stokes was 15.

Sentencing was scheduled for April 15. He could face up to 45 years in prison.

After the verdict, Stokes said he felt vindicated.

"Mr. Blackwell was at no point on trial. It was all about me," he said. "The world can see that I'm not a perfect person, but I stand here right and he stands wrong."

Blackwell had served house detention on a gun charge related to the shooting.

Blackwell declined to comment. Defense attorney Kenneth Ravenell said he felt jurors reached their decision on evidence they should not have heard, referring to the judge's references to "other victims," which the judge ordered stricken from the record.

"It's impossible for people to wipe clear what they've already heard," Ravenell said. He said he planned to seek a retrial and if that failed, to appeal that decision.

On Wednesday, the jurors deliberated five hours without reaching a verdict, sending the case to the judge, saying they were unable to agree and asking how to proceed.

Judge Stuart Berger read them standardized instructions Thursday morning on the



Defrocked priest Maurice Blackwell, left, is escorted from the Baltimore City Circuit Court Thursday by his attorney Kenneth Ravenell, right, in Baltimore.

importance of a unanimous verdict. They then deliberated about a half-hour more before reaching their verdicts.

Stokes had made accusations against Blackwell in 1993, but Blackwell denied the allegations and no other alleged victims came forward at the time. Blackwell received psychological treatment and returned to his parish, although he was barred from working with children and young adults.

In May 2002, in the midst of the national scandal involving Catholic priests, Stokes shot Blackwell three times. In the aftermath, Baltimore prosecutors reviewed Stokes' old allegations and charged Blackwell with abuse.

Stokes, who testified he had an "out-of-body experience" at the time of the shooting, was acquitted of attempted murder in December 2002 but was convicted on gun charges. He served 18 months on home detention.



John Negroponte a former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, was named as President Bush named him as the first national intelligence director Thursday.

an adviser. Bush chose him for the job last April and he went to Baghdad hours after the handover of sovereignty to Iraq's interim government. Negroponte has also been ambassador to the Philippines, Mexico and Honduras.

The director of national intelligence will hold a pre-eminent role in U.S. national security affairs and coordinate the work of all 15 U.S. intelligence agencies.

Bush's Europe trip has promise

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The fence-mending trips, makeup meetings and friendly photo ops spread over the past two years have failed to repair problems between President Bush and European leaders.

But the president's visit to Europe next week holds the promise of better relations for the simple pragmatic reason that disgruntled allies know they have to work with him for four more years.

Bush is unpopular in Europe for ordering the invasion of Iraq and pursuing what is widely seen as a foreign policy that ignores the views of other countries. Many leaders did not hide their hope that Democratic Sen. John Kerry would win the presidency in November.

Bush extended an olive branch at a news conference Thursday. He said he would reassure Europeans that "as we move beyond the differences of the past, that we can work a lot together to achieve big objectives."

European countries are not expecting any major changes in U.S. policy as a result of Bush's visit, said John Bruton, the European Union's ambassador to the United States.

"What they are hoping for is an increase in the level of trust," Bruton said.

Bush will fly to Brussels, Belgium, on Sunday for a three-night stay. He will hold a dinner with French President Jacques Chirac, the most vocal critic of U.S. policy in Iraq. Bush also will meet with NATO leaders and visit the headquarters of the European Union. The visit to the EU headquarters is seen as an important step that he takes the European Union seriously. Bush also will stop in Germany for talks with Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, and will meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Slovakia.

Charges dropped against airline pilot

The Associated Press

BUFFALO, N.Y. — A United Airlines pilot who also flew for the National Guard has been cleared of charges that he lied on an application for a security clearance in a case that began when an acquaintance reported that he'd talked about crashing a plane into Wall Street.

Maj. Robert Fenezi, 44, of San Diego, was arrested last

week by FBI agents with the Joint Terrorism Task Force of Western New York and pleaded not guilty to the charge of making false statements on a Defense Department form.

Fenezi's attorney said the government agreed to drop the charge Wednesday after determining Fenezi's application had been accurate.

"What we wish is that they would have investigated before

they arrested him," attorney Mark Mahoney said.

Fenezi was not charged in connection with the alleged threat to Wall Street.

Mahoney said the pilot denied ever making such a statement.

"We cannot fathom the reason or motivation for including this career-stopping allegation in the [lying] charges to begin with, knowing that such a claim would catapult this case, and Maj. Fene-

ziani, into the national spotlight," Mahoney said.

"They never talked to me about anything," Fenezi said.

U.S. Attorney Michael Battle told The Buffalo News the investigation was continuing and the case could be sent to a grand jury. He declined to elaborate.

Fenezi is assigned to the New York Air National Guard's 107th Air Refueling Wing in Niagara Falls.

'Big Apple' no more

NEW YORK — Forget "The Big Apple." New York now wants to be known as "The World's Second Home."

The city has filed an application to trademark the slogan "The World's Second Home," giving the city exclusive rights to use it to promote business and tourism.

The phrase is likely to come up often as New York makes its push to host the 2012 Olympics.

If the application is accepted, the city would have exclusive rights to attach the phrase to a list of more than 200 products and services, according to Thursday's editions of the New York Times.

No pranks allowed

McCOOK, Neb. — Two high schools turned down offers from MTV to film a re-creation of a class prank in which a group of students parked a car outside the door to the principal's office.

"It's not part of school life that we need to promote," McCook Public High School Principal Jerry Smith said. Smith told the cable television station the school would not participate in "High School Stories" because the 2003 prank was not part of the district's curriculum or goals for students' education.

After the rejection, Tyler Bieck, whose car was used in the prank, wrote the school board urging it approve the filming, saying the MTV visit would be "a great opportunity for exposure for the community of McCook and the McCook Public School System." The board declined.

From The Associated Press

Boxer on TV's 'The Contender' commits suicide

BY DAVID B. CARUSO

The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — A promising young boxer who got the break of a lifetime when he was selected by NBC's upcoming reality TV program, "The Contender," committed suicide.

Police said 23-year-old Najai Turpin shot himself in the head at 4 a.m. Monday while sitting with his girlfriend in a parked car outside the West Philadelphia gym where he trained. Investigators were unsure why he took his life.

An NBC spokeswoman said the producers, cast and crew of "The Contender" were shocked and saddened by Turpin's death. The program, scheduled to debut March 7, will go on as planned.

Produced by reality TV mogul Mark Burnett, "The Contender" will follow the lives of 16 boxers competing for a chance at a million-dollar purse.

The episodes involving Turpin had already been taped.

Percy "Buster" Custus, a trainer who had worked with him since Turpin was 12, said the boxer had enjoyed his experiences with the show but seemed troubled in recent weeks. He said Turpin abruptly left a training camp in the Poconos and returned home to Philadelphia, saying he missed his family.

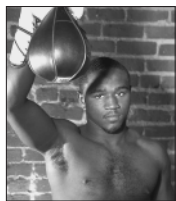
"None of us really knew what brought this about," Custus said Tuesday. "You just want to see

the boys come out of the neighborhood. From the time they're young kids, you really want to see them make it. And he was right there."

Turpin had a 13-1 record and had won a city Recreation Department title before he was picked for "The Contender."

"The episode in which he was most depicted will stand as a wonderful testament to who he was. It will not be changed," Burnett wrote in a statement released by NBC.

A tribute to Turpin will be added to the show. Viewers will also be offered a chance to donate money to a trust fund set up to support Turpin's 2-year-old daughter.



Police say Najai Turpin, of NBC's "The Contender," shot and killed himself Monday outside a gym.

Message for our men and women in uniform...

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Class-action lawsuits

WASHINGTON — Limiting most large class-action lawsuits to federal court will lead to a more robust economy and lower prices for consumers, say House Republicans preparing to secure their first major legislative victory of the year.

But Democratic opponents, who admit they can't stop the legislation, say Republicans' only interest is in hurting Democratic dominance and helping big business escape multimillion-dollar verdicts from state courts.

The House was expected to give final congressional approval Wednesday to legislation that would take large multistate class-action lawsuits out of state courts and move them into federal courts.

Shipping ban challenged

WASHINGTON — CSX Corp. sued the District of Columbia on Wednesday, challenging the city's new law banning hazardous shipments within two miles of the U.S. Capitol.

In a U.S. District Court filing, the freight railroad asked that the law be declared unconstitutional on grounds that it impedes interstate commerce. Federal law requires the company to transport the banned materials, and the city's ban is an "unreasonable burden," the company wrote.

Ferry searches suit

MONTPELIER, Vt. — A federal judge on Wednesday dismissed a lawsuit that sought to block random searches of passengers and vehicles using ferries that cross Lake Champlain.

U.S. District Court Judge J. Garvan Murtha said the searches of people seeking to board the Lake Champlain Transportation Co. ferries were not intrusive and were reasonable given terrorism concerns. The lake forms part of the New York-Vermont border and extends into Canada.

The searches are required under the National Maritime Transportation Security Act, which took effect July 1.

Lighters on planes OK

WASHINGTON — Passengers on U.S. airlines could still carry butane lighters onto planes on Wednesday, even though a congressionally ordered ban was supposed to go into effect on Tuesday.

The Transportation Security Administration, the agency charged with prohibiting dangerous items on aircraft, offered no comment on why it missed the deadline.

The ban was ushered through Congress last year by Sens. Byron Dorgan and Ken Wyden.

The two senators were concerned that the lighters could be used to ignite a bomb on an airline. Richard Reid, the convicted shoe bomber, could have succeeded in setting up a trans-Atlantic flight three years ago if a flight attendant hadn't smelled the sulfur from his burning match, they said.

The TSA allows passengers to carry two butane lighters and four books of matches on board a plane.

From The Associated Press

Nation-building part of Bush war bill

\$82B request includes aid for Afghanistan, Ukraine and Middle East

BY ALAN FRAM
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Money for public opinion research for the new Ukrainian government, seven provincial Afghan hospitals and Palestinian community centers was included in President Bush's \$81.9 billion request for war funding and aid to U.S. allies, according to administration documents obtained by The Associated Press.

The materials, obtained Wednesday, also describe spending to start a law school in Afghanistan, smooth the issuance of Ukraine's driver's licenses and passports and build water treatment facilities in Jordan.

The papers, spotty in detail, describe how \$4 billion of Bush's proposal would be spent for a handful of countries, the Palestinians, and trouble spots like Sudan and Indian Ocean countries flooded by the December tsunami.

On Wednesday, two top House Republicans said lawmakers might remove some foreign aid proposals from Bush's latest package.

Majority Leader Tom DeLay, R-Texas, and House Appropriations Committee Chairman Jerry Lewis, R-Calif., said lawmakers would scrutinize the request for items that could be dropped until later this year.

The overall war and foreign aid bill Bush sent Congress Monday was dominated by \$74.9 billion for the Defense Department, mostly for its operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Half of the \$4 billion in foreign aid the documents describe would be for Afghanistan. That includes \$68 million to build 65 schools and seven technical training centers and provide vocational training, teaching training for women and scholarships abroad.

There is also \$25 million for the country's legal sector, and another \$69 million would be for seven provincial hospitals, 210 health clinics and other health projects.

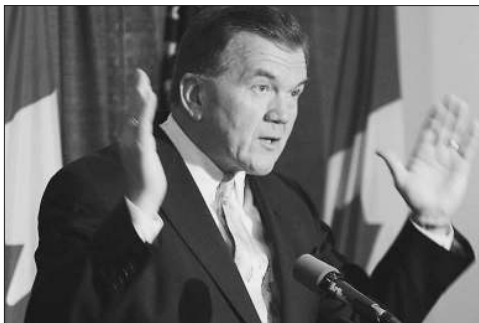
There would be \$285 million to train Afghan police, including providing 532 "embedded" advisers, 34 driving practice ranges and

literacy training. Other Afghan expenditures would include \$300 million for the country's electrical system; \$82 million for water and farm projects; \$66 million to develop private businesses; and \$85 million for creating legal and judicial systems.

The \$200 million for economic and military aid for Jordan would include unspecified funds for school construction, job training, night vision equipment and other gear for border guards.

Ukraine, where free elections were held a month ago, would get \$60 million that the papers say would be largely aimed at helping pro-western President Viktor Yushchenko solidify his victory so his party can win a parliamentary majority in the scheduled March 2006 elections.

The \$200 million for Palestinians would include money for promoting trade, boosting agriculture, building schools and community centers, instituting democratic reforms and providing social services.



Then-Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge talks with reporters in Ottawa on Oct. 14. Ridge, who told reporters, "We don't do politics in the Department of Homeland Security," met twice with GOP pollsters during a 10-day period in 2004.

Ridge met with GOP pollsters during presidential campaign

BY PETE YOST
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Former U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge met privately with Republican pollsters twice in a 10-day span last spring as he embarked on more than a dozen trips to presidential battleground states.

Ridge's get-togethers with Republican strategists Frank Luntz and Bill McInturf during a period the secretary was saying his agency was playing no role in President Bush's re-election campaign were revealed in daily appointment calendars obtained by The Associated Press under the Freedom of Information Act.

"We don't do politics in the Department of Homeland Security," Ridge told reporters during the election season.

His aides resisted releasing the calendars for over a year, finally providing them to the AP three days after Ridge left office this month.

Homeland Security officials said the meet-

ing with Luntz at department headquarters was aimed at improving public communication of the department's message, particularly on TV. Ridge declined an interview with the AP about the calendars, referring questions to former aides.

"We did not discuss homeland security in a presidential campaign context," said Susan Neely, a former assistant homeland security secretary who attended the May 17 session with Luntz and Ridge. "We asked him his impression of how well we were explaining what over the issues were of the day. There was no follow-up meeting."

Neely said the discussion took place after Ridge and Luntz ran into each other and the homeland security secretary expressed an interest in hearing Luntz's assessment.

McInturf, who has been polling for all of Ridge's campaigns for Congress and Pennsylvania governor, said the two meet every few months to "shoot the breeze."

Homeland security officials said the May 26 conversation between Ridge and McInturf was personal and the secretary did not discuss any homeland security-related issues.

Schwarzenegger's redistricting plan has GOP nervous

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Some of California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's fellow Republicans are promoting a plan that would let him run for president. He's promoting a plan that could cost some of them their jobs.

As Schwarzenegger visits Capitol Hill on Thursday to meet with California lawmakers, his proposal to redraw congressional and state legislative districts could be at the top of the agenda for some Republican House members.

When he arrived at the Capitol, Schwarzenegger told reporters that he hoped to accomplish "as much as we can, I can guarantee you that."

Asked if he came with a wish list, Schwarzenegger said: "Oh yes, I have it in my pocket."

The governor didn't escape home-state political battles. He was greeted by a full-page ad in the Capitol Hill newspaper Roll Call taken out by the California Nurses Association, with whom he's been fighting over nurse staffing ratios. "As soon as we go to Sacramento, the governor put vital health policy up for sale," the ad said.

Schwarzenegger began his day meeting with House Appropriations Committee Chairman Jerry Lewis, R-Calif.

Schwarzenegger wants a panel of retired judges to redraw California's political map next year. That job is currently done by state lawmakers, and under the normal timeline wouldn't happen until after the 2010 census.

Schwarzenegger argues his plan would result in a more democratic process and more competitive elections. It could also lead to more moderate politicians, like himself, who would be easier for him to work with in Sacramento.

Some Republicans fear redrawing districts in Democrat-leaning California could cost the party seats in Congress.

Even if the GOP managed to keep the 20 seats it now holds — Democrats have 33 — perpetual lawmakers who lead in the Republican-controlled House could find themselves fighting for their jobs before unfamiliar voters.



Schwarzenegger

Separation considered for Romanian twins

Conjoined sisters under evaluation in Dallas

By JAMIE STENGLE

The Associated Press

DALLAS — When Claudia and Alin Dogaru's twin daughters were born conjoined at the head a year ago, doctors told them nothing could be done.

But the Romanian couple found renewed hope when they learned that Dallas surgeons successfully separated them 2-year-old Egyptian conjoined twins in 2003. Now the entire family is in Dallas as Tatiana and Anastasia undergo evaluation for possible separation.

"If we can do nothing, then that will be so, but we will search for a second opinion," said Alin Dogaru, 30.

The case is complex — the top of Tatiana's head is attached to the back of Anastasia's and each girl relies on the other for basic functions — so it could be a month or so before doctors know if surgery is even possible.

Still, the separation of Ahmed and Mohamed Ibrahim has given

doctors hope as well. The boys, who were also joined at the head, are now active 3½-year-olds, walking and talking.

"I think that we are more optimistic today than we were five years ago in the separation of craniopagus twins because of our experience with the boys," said Dr. Kenneth Salyer, a craniofacial surgeon and founder of the Dallas-based World Craniofacial Foundation, which brought both sets of twins to the United States.

Born Jan. 13, 2004, in Rome, the girls were brought to Texas in October to be evaluated.

The Dogarus, who live in Italy, are together again after Alin arrived in Dallas a couple of weeks ago to be with his wife, the twins and their 4-year-old daughter, Maria Cristina.

Besides sharing a series of veins, there are other complications. Anastasia, who is larger than her sister, only has a small portion of her kidneys. So most kidney function is taken care of by Tatiana. And Tatiana doesn't



Alin Dogaru, right, plays Wednesday with twin daughters Anastasia, center right, and Tatiana, who are conjoined at the head, as Tatiana is held by their mother, Claudia Dogaru, in Dallas.

eat much, relying on her sister for nutrition.

Salyer said that he hopes for a decision on surgery in one to two months. From there, doctors must work on a separation plan. The plan for the Egyptian boys

took more than a year to develop.

Doctors also need to work out what to do about Anastasia's lack of kidney function. One option is a transplant, Salyer said.

Meanwhile, the girls make the best of their situation, playing

with their toys and their older sister.

"We are pushed always to move toward separation," Salyer said. "We are motivated to do it because we feel that two children cannot survive in this state."

Judge: Baby stays on life support

Mother wins temporary restraining order

The Associated Press

HOUSTON — A mother fighting to keep a hospital from removing her infant son from the ventilator that has kept him alive since birth has won another temporary restraining order.

The 1st Court of Appeals reinstated the order keeping 4-month-old Sun Hudson on life support Wednesday, just hours after a probate court judge lifted the order. A hearing was set for Tuesday.

The dispute centers on the legal standard over hospital care in Texas. Under state law, a hospital must continue care if there is a reasonable probability that another hospital will admit the patient.

Texas Children's Hospital officials have said no treatment can save Sun, and they want to remove him from life support. Hospital lawyers said state officials have contacted almost 40 facilities

and none have been willing to care for infant.

But the boy's mother, Wanda Hudson, believes her son will recover. Her attorney argued there is a reasonable chance another hospital would take the child.

Sun suffers from thanatophoric dysplasia, a genetic condition characterized by extremely short limbs, a narrow chest, small ribs and underdeveloped lungs. Infants usually are stillborn or die shortly after birth from respiratory failure. However, there have been rare documented cases of survivors.

"He is slowly suffocating to death because his lungs lack the capability to support his body," the hospital said.

Hudson hasn't seen her son in more than a month but says she believes she communicates with him telepathically.

"Sun is going to live forever,"



Wanda Hudson, whose 4-month-old son, Sun, has been on a ventilator since birth, asks Wednesday if Texas Children's Hospital's attorneys are happy after a judge's ruling.

she said. "As long as the Sun is in the sky, he will live. I don't believe in death."

Scientists map genes to fight inherited diseases

By LAURAN NEERGAARD

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Scientists have taken a major step in the hunt for disease-causing genes by creating the first map of common human genetic variation — patterns of tiny but potentially powerful DNA differences.

The research, to be made public Thursday at a scientific meet-

ing and in the journal Science, is essentially a first draft. A more detailed version is expected later this year.

The map "will provide an invaluable resource for genetic research to improve human health," Science's editor-in-chief,

Donald Kennedy, said in a statement.

Even unrelated people share DNA that is 99.9 percent similar.

The last remaining bit is crucial because variations within it can determine traits, from hair color and risk of heart disease to people's response to different medications.

Until now, most genetics breakthroughs have come in diseases where a big mutation in a single gene causes illness.

But the most common health problems, such as heart disease, diabetes or depression, are caused by complex interactions

between numerous genes and environmental or behavioral risk factors.

Finding genetic culprits under those conditions is even more laborious.

The most common type of genetic variation is like a spelling error. DNA is made up of precise orders of chemicals identified with the letters A, T, C or G. When one of those letters gets

out of order, it is called a single-nucleotide polymorphism (SNP, pronounced "snip"). Each tiny difference may have profound effects.

In the new research, scientists at Perlegen Sciences Inc. of Mountain View, Calif., examined the DNA of 71 Americans of European, African or Chinese ancestry.

Researchers identified 1.58 million SNPs, most of them shared across the three populations, according to the findings being presented at a meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

The map does not say which SNPs cause various physical or disease-related traits. But it provides genetic signposts to help other scientists more quickly answer those questions, Perlegen's lead researchers, David R. Cox and David A. Hinds, conclude.

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OPINION

Be a trooper for your spouse when reunited

BY ALLIE OCHS

Laura anxiously anticipates the return of her husband, Dan. What will it be like and what should she do? After all, he is not returning from a successful business trip or golf weekend. He is coming home from war.

Should she arrange a romantic just-for-the-two-of-us event or a family reunion? This is the first homecoming experience in their young marriage. It has been more than a year since Dan left. Little

Maja was born three months ago and Dan has yet to meet his new baby girl.

Laura — once shy, dependent and overweight — turned into a self-reliant and confident woman. She joined the gym, lost weight and signed up for computer classes. Even though Laura had missed Dan terribly, she adapted to being a military wife. They had kept each other up to date through e-mail and phone calls. Dan will be surprised to find how much has changed since he left.

How do you deal with the challenges of homecoming? Relax and accept that homecoming can be difficult. In getting ready for the big day, put your own needs aside and help your spouse reconnect with the life he or she left behind.

The real challenge is life after deployment. Historically, those fighting in combat have a much greater likelihood of relationship breakups than their civilian counterparts. Depending on how devastating the war experience has been, your soldier may not be the same person that you saw

off. Your spouse could have witnessed others — including children or comrades — die. He or she may have been forced to kill in the line of duty.

While your soldier may not share all of these experiences with you, listen with empathy if he or she does. Even though your life was clouded with fear during deployment, don't compete for the "most wounded" heart.

After the big homecoming, you might be anxious to get on with life as a couple, yet find each other at different junctures. Returning from a country at war, everyday life may now seem trivial to your spouse. He or she may suffer from post-war trauma or guilt.

Here are the two of you trying to pick up where you left off. This is the critical point where military couples set the stage for either a spiral breakdown or deeper love. How do you prevent your relationship from becoming a divorce statistic? Simply be what people in exceptional relationships are: fit to love. Do what people in exceptional relationships do: become better for each other every day. By following the three principles of being fit to love — mutual respect, moral responsibility and authenticity — you can turn your relationship into a solid anchor. Here is what these principles mean:

■ **Mutual respect:** Exercise true mutual respect instead of self-serving respect. In real terms, this means your partner is just as important to you as you are. Respect her homecoming soldier feels. He or she has gone through a life-changing phase while serving, an experience the two of you did not share. Cherish the new person that has emerged. Accept his or her altered perspective on life and be open to learn from it.

■ **Moral responsibility:** You are always



PORTSMOUTH (OHIO) DAILY TIMES/AP

Spec. David Bradford is greeted by his wife, Alisha, at a welcome-home ceremony for the Ohio National Guard's Company B, 216th Engineer Battalion in Portsmouth, Ohio, last Friday. The unit had been deployed for more than a year in support of the Iraq war.

morally responsible to your partner. Everything you think, say or do affects your partner. Sometimes you even have to think of your partner first. Yes, you are responsible for each other's well-being. Be kind, loving and understanding. Allow for time to heal the wounds. Be sensitive and encouraging when you help your partner get on with life. It is your job to be an anchor.

■ **Authenticity:** Be you! Create and be the best of you. Be better for each other. Be honest about your own feelings, but don't blame each other if your relationship is going through change. It could also

be a change for the better. Depending on how you react, crises such as these are often the kick-start for more authentic and more solid relationships. Take your cues from your heart, for it will never betray you.

Think back to when you wholeheartedly committed to your partner. Did you commit to respect and be morally responsible to each other? Did you commit to be the best you could be for each other? Sure you did, and now you have a chance to do all that and do it better.

Allie Ochs is a relationship expert, coach, speaker and author of "Are You Fit To Love?" She lives in St. Catharines, Ontario.

Old GIs will serve in Iraq, but wars aren't uniform

BY JOE VOLZ

The late Gen. Douglas MacArthur, supreme U.S. commander in the Pacific in World War II, told Congress in his farewell address, "Old soldiers never die, they just fade away."

(Mac said farewell a few years after World War II while leading U.N. troops to a stalemate with the communists during the Korean War. He refused to take the war to China and was fired by President Truman, who didn't.)

Well, these days that quote, which MacArthur attributed to an old ballad, may need some revision. The Army is now looking for a few good old soldiers, from the ages of 40 to the late 60s, for duty either in the United States or Iraq. It's called a "prudent" measure to beef up overworked forces strained to capacity because of efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

I'm an old soldier. I was in Germany in the 1950s. Maybe I could get assigned to the Maryland city of Frederick's largest employer, Fort Detrick, or at a recruiting station. So far, the Army has signed up 300 retirees — both grunts like me and officers. The Marines have recruited 60 old troopers.

The retirees would have to serve a year. They would not be the front-line combat soldiers but would help build schools and roads and be civil affairs officers. Sort of a military version of the Peace Corps.

The fine print is going to eliminate me, however, and millions of others. There is a draft and served only two years. The Army wants professionals who were in for 20.

But, nevertheless, I thought about it for a

few minutes. What would it be like for this old G.I. Joe to report for duty once again?

It's an entirely different Army now, not just because it is the best trained and best equipped fighting force we have ever had, but the symbols have changed, too. I was in the olive-drab, brown-belt Army. Now, it is black boots and Army green. And there are women in some combat roles this time around.

Most of the places where I was stationed have since closed, such as Fort Holabird in Baltimore, where I went to Army Intelligence School. The key course I took as an intelligence analyst was typing. I told my teacher then I had been typing for years, so I got some "on-the-job" training helping the secretaries do their work.

Today's all-volunteer Army — and President Bush says it will stay that way — is much more motivated than we were. Many of today's regular Army troops believe that they are performing an important mission. That, as Woodrow Wilson put it, they are making the world safe for democracy.

Some of us old soldiers might take a different position. I certainly would not be enthusiastic about being shipped to Iraq. We shouldn't be there at this point. I wouldn't "get with the program," so I might be more of a liability than an asset to the military.

But, however, it might be good to get some calmer heads into the mix — men whose testosterone level has dropped enough so that we don't feel we have to

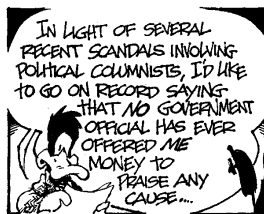
fight all comers. We wouldn't fight for pride. Maybe we would even be role models.

If there is a way to find a path out of the bloodshed, old soldiers — men who have served our nation at places such as Pork Chop Hill or Da Nang — may have some answers. Old soldiers have seen wars. I was fortunate to have been too young for Korea and too old for Vietnam, but I saw the rubble of war spread across the face of Europe.)

It is often said that old men send young men off to die. This time, some old soldiers may find a way to help stop the dying. That would be the ultimate act of patriotism.

Joe Volz's columns, including this one, appear in The Frederick (MD) News-Post.

Mallard Fillmore



...AND THAT, AS A MATTER OF JOURNALISTIC ETHICS, I THINK IT'S WRONG AND WOULDN'T TAKE IT!



BY BRUCE TINSLEY

IN THE WORLD

Iran calls for alliance against U.S., Israel

BY NASSER KARIMI

The Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran — Iran on Thursday urged regional countries to create a powerful alliance and remain vigilant in the face of "U.S. and Israeli plots," a call coming a day after Syria and Iran declared they would form a united front in the face of any threats.

The United States has recently escalated its criticism of both Syria and Iran, demanding that Syria withdraw its troops from Lebanon and accusing Tehran of running a covert nuclear weapons program.

The United States has also said both countries need to do more to prevent insurgents from traveling to Iraq from their territory.

On Thursday, President Bush said that Syria is "out of step" with the nations of the Middle East and said the United States will work with other countries to

Myers: New conflict would strain military

Stars and Stripes

Stretched thin in Iraq, the U.S. military would have trouble responding as quickly and effectively as commanders would like if it had to go to war in Iran or North Korea, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff told Congress on Wednesday, according to USA Today.

Air Force Gen. Richard Myers said a sudden military crisis in one of those two nations — both of which are resisting U.S. demands that they give up nuclear programs — would likely force the Pentagon to reemphasize Reserve and Guard components that have rotated home from Iraq to rest, USA Today reported in its Thursday editions.

In addition, because of the current strain on U.S. forces, it would take longer for U.S. troops to respond to a crisis in Iran, North Korea or some

other major conflict than U.S. battle plans call for, Myers told the House Armed Services Committee.

"The timeliness of our response might not be totally consistent with what the combatant commander wants and so forth," the paper reported Myers as saying.

Myers and other senior military officials have acknowledged that U.S. forces are stretched by deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. They have never acknowledged in public, however, that that could result in having to compromise plans for another war.

Under Defense Department doctrine, the military must be able to simultaneously fight and swiftly defeat two enemies in two different parts of the world. One of those conflicts can be an enduring one, such as Iraq.

"We can still do that," Myers insisted.

pressure Damascus to remove its troops from Lebanon.

Myers' former Persian Minister Mohammad Najj al-Otari, said strengthening relations between Iran, Syria, Iraq,

Lebanon and other Islamic states in the region was of great importance, the official Islamic Republic News Agency reported.

On Wednesday, Syria and Iran, both facing pressure from the United States, said they will form a united front to confront possible threats. But later that day the Syrian ambassador to the United States said that "we do not need an alliance against the United States" in an interview.

Satan in school: Class thwarts lure of devil

BY ANGELA DOLAND

The Associated Press

ROME — Worried about the lure of the devil, a Vatican-linked university on Thursday debuted its latest course offering: a class on Satanism, black magic and exorcism.

The class for clergy and seminarians at Rome's Pontifical Academy "Regina Apostolorum" arose from alarm about what some religious officials see as Satan practices among young people, especially in Italy.

In one case in Italy in January, members of a heavy metal band called Besets of Satan were ordered to stand trial for their alleged role in three ritual killings. One of the victims was a 19-year-old stabbed to death in 1998. She may have been targeted because her killers believed she was a personification of the Virgin Mary, prosecutors contend.

A major theme of the first day's course was how to differentiate between a person who is possessed and someone who is simply suffering psychological problems.

Rome exorcist Francesco Bamonte described how he works with a team of priests and psychologists to make the distinction before deciding whether to go through with an exorcism.

"If not, I would be inundated with requests from people who don't need me," said Bamonte, who said he performs about 20 exorcisms a year.

The Vatican is also concerned about a growing number of young people who develop what instructors call potential forms of Satanism, outside the sects that are closely monitored by police.

They often learn about the devil through the Internet.

"It's a more spontaneous and hidden phenomenon, a problem of loneliness and isolation, a problem of emptiness, that is fulfilled by the values of Satanism," said one of the teachers, Carlo Ciani.

In 1999, the Vatican issued its first new guidelines since 1614 for driving out devils, offering cautions to exorcists about taking psychiatric problems into account. The updated exorcism rite was



Italian exorcist father Gabriele Nanni holds his book, "The Finger of God and the Power of Satan, the Exorcism," after giving his lesson on Satanism for clergy at Rome's Regina Apostolorum Pontifical Academy on Thursday.

a reflection of Pope John Paul II's efforts to convince the skeptical that the devil is very much in the world.

Among the signs of possession by the devil, according to church teaching, are speaking in unknown tongues and demonstrating physical force beyond one's natural capacity.

Israel to end house-razing payback

JERUSALEM — Israeli Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz ordered end Thursday to the policy of demolishing the houses of Palestinians involved in attacks against Israelis, the military said.

An internal army review of the policy called it ineffective, concluding that it inflamed anger and failed to deter attacks. The practice has been condemned by human rights groups.

During the past four years of violence, Israeli soldiers using bulldozers and explosives have flattened 666 homes in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Plutonium discrepancy shrugged off

LONDON — A British nuclear reprocessing plant cannot account for nearly 66 pounds of plutonium, but authorities believe it's an accounting issue rather than a loss of potential bomb-making material, the U.K. Atomic Energy Authority said Thursday.

The amount of material listed as missing at the Sellafield plant in northwestern England was "within international standards of expected measurement accuracies for cloning a nuclear material balance at the type of facility concerned," the authority said.

There is no evidence to suggest that any of the apparent losses reported were real losses of nuclear material," the authority added.

Italy nabs suspected mob boss

ROME — Italian police said Wednesday they have arrested a mob boss who had been on the run for about a decade and was on the country's list of 30 most wanted figures.

Gregorio Bellocchio was found hiding in a bunker in a pre-dawn raid Wednesday in Reggio Calabria, home to the 'Ndrangheta crime syndicate.

Investigators believe Bellocchio is a top member of the 'Ndrangheta, and he has to serve time on several convictions, including a life sentence for murder, said the ANSA news agency.

The 'Ndrangheta crime syndicate is eclipsing the Sicilian Mafia, Italian officials say, and has acquired a dominant position in drug trafficking.

Officials: Plan targeted Eiffel Tower

PARIS — Islamic militants under investigation for allegedly planning an attack on the Russian Embassy in Paris had other targets on their list, including the Eiffel Tower, police and judicial officials said Wednesday.

Three men, all Algerians, were detained Jan. 11 in connection with an investigation into a network of Islamic radicals supporting the rebels, the officials said on condition of anonymity.

According to judicial officials, targets included the Eiffel Tower, a clothing store in the central Paris district of Les Halles, Israeli interests and police stations.

From The Associated Press

Plan will integrate global observation systems

BY JOSH BROWN

The Associated Press

BRUSSELS, Belgium — The European Union's head office on Thursday called for more international cooperation in space as plans move ahead for a combined global observation system to predict natural disasters like tsunamis and drastic weather changes.

European Enterprise Commissioner Guenter Verheugen said the European Space Agency and all EU nations should "step up cooperation" in space, echoing comments earlier this week by nations speaking at the third annual Earth Observation Summit.

Nearly 60 countries, 30 international organizations and the EU launched a 10-year plan to integrate many satellite observing systems currently operating independently to allow for more collaboration internationally. The new project is called the Global Earth Observation System of Systems, or GEOSS.

U.S. Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez said at the meeting that integrating the international observing systems will bring fundamental change, especially when it comes to predicting disasters like the tsunami in Asia Dec. 26.

"While we may not be able to control when nature decides to flex its incredible power, we can control our ability to

warn citizens and keep them out of harm's way," Gutierrez said.

Predicting temperatures only one degree more accurately would save in the United States alone \$1 billion in electricity, he said.

And predicting drought could save farmers millions of dollars, preventing them from wasting money planting crops in years where there would be little rain.

Lautenbacher said satellite technology will be available in the next three to four years that will allow scientists to monitor the chemical composition of the atmosphere and track how greenhouse gases travel from country to country.

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Woman hits police

IN SOUTH BEND — A 79-year-old woman has been charged with using her wooden cane to strike police officers who arrived at her home to check on her welfare.

St. Joseph County prosecutors said the officers came to investigate a possible domestic abuse charge against Betty Chambers' live-in caretaker, Thomas Holleman, 57.

As the officers tried to handcuff Holleman, Chambers allegedly struck Officer Louie Foresman over the head with her cane, prosecutors said.

Foresman suffered a mild concussion while Sgt. John Pavlekovich suffered a separated shoulder and hand injury, said Jaimee Thirion, a spokeswoman for St. Joseph County police.

Prosecutors charged Chambers and Holleman with resisting law enforcement and battery.

State whiskey banned

AL MONTGOMERY — Alabama's official state whiskey has been banned from sale in the state.

The Alabama Alcoholic Beverage Control Board notified Concecuh Ridge Distillery that its state license had been revoked because of liquor law violations by its owners. The Legislature is in the process of repealing Concecuh Ridge's designation as the official state whiskey.

The Troy-based company has been in turmoil since founder Kenny May pleaded guilty to misdemeanor charges involving illegal sales, including selling a case of whiskey to an 18-year-old girl. Alabama's legal drinking age is 21.

The Alabama Legislature voted last year, over Gov. Bob Riley's veto, to make Concecuh Ridge Alabama's "official state spirit."

The product is made in Kentucky, but May asserted that it was based on a recipe created by his father, Clyde May, a famous Alabama bootlegger.

Poor may lose housing

MA BOSTON — About 4,700 of the state's poorest citizens would be at risk of losing their state-subsidized housing after three years, and many would be required to work while receiving housing benefits, under a proposal in Gov. Mitt Romney's budget plan.

The administration said the three-year limit on people who participate in the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program is consistent with Romney's emphasis on helping the poor become self-sufficient, but critics say the plan does not take into account the state's expensive housing market.

The voucher program is an alternative to public housing in that it allows recipients to pay for housing on the private market, where rents average \$1,300 for a two-bedroom apartment in Boston.

Man/Boy Love raid

CA LOS ANGELES — Seven members of the North American Man/Boy Love Association, including two teachers, were arrested in Southern California and charged with allegedly planning to travel to Mexico to have



AMERICAN ROUNDUP

sex with boys, authorities said. An eighth man was charged with distributing child pornography, said FBI spokeswoman Laura Emililer.

They were charged Monday, following a sting operation in which each man allegedly paid hundreds of dollars to an undercover agent to arrange the sex, the Federal Bureau of Investigation said during a news conference Monday.

The men had allegedly traveled from their home to Southern California with the expectation of boarding a boat to Ensenada, where they were told sex with the boys was awaiting them at a bed-and-breakfast, Emililer said. Through the undercover agent, she said, they requested that the boys be as young as 8 years old.

NAMBLA, which was formed in 1978 and advocates relationships with men and boys, was not charged in the case.

Dem. staffers charged

WI MILWAUKEE — Five Democratic campaign staffers — including the sons of a congresswoman and a former city official — were ordered Tuesday to stand trial for allegedly vandalizing Republican get-out-the-vote vans on Election Day.

The five are accused of slashing the tires of 25 vans rented by the state GOP to drive voters and monitors to the polls. The felony charge carries a maximum punishment of 3½ years in prison and a \$10,000 fine. Arraignment was set for March 4.

The defendants include the sons of



That's gotta' hurt!

Nathan Graves comes off his horse Tuesday night in San Antonio as he competes in the 14th performance of the San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo at the SBC Center. Graves received no score for the ride.

of Wisconsin Rep. Gwen Moore and former acting Mayor Marvin Pratt.

At a preliminary hearing, Levor Stoney and Opel Simmons, two Democratic presidential campaign workers sent to Wisconsin in the final weeks of the campaign, testified they were in the Milwaukee headquarters when the five left just after 3 a.m. Election Day and returned shortly after.

"They seemed to be excited, excited, kind of gleeful, laughing and kind of joking," Simmons said. Stoney said Michael Pratt, the former acting mayor's son, talked about slashing a couple of tires, and Moore's son, Sowande Omokunde, also talked about the vandalism. He said at least one had a knife; he could not recall which one.

Defense attorneys suggested Stoney and Simmons were also part of an alleged plan to plaster the GOP office and property with Kerry-Edwards signs and bumper stickers before polls opened.

Prosecutors contend the five defendants came up with the tire-slashing plan after a security guard was posted at the GOP office.

He tried, but no dough!

CA RICHMOND — A would-be robber in a backhoe tried to rip an automatic teller machine from the wall of a bank early Monday, but did little more than make a big mess before fleeing empty-handed, police said.

"The guy stole the backhoe from around the corner at a construction site and used the front scoop to try to take out the ATM," said police spokesman Sgt. Enos Johnson.

The robber heavily damaged the bank's exterior wall and destroyed the ATM, but "the safe appeared to be intact," Johnson said.

Homicide rate up

MD UPPER MARLBORO — Prince George's County law enforcement officials are concerned about a high number of homicides this year, a spokeswoman for police Chief Melvin C. High said. Slayings in the county are up to 20 this year, including two people killed over the weekend. Last year, the county registered 148 homicides.

Sen. backs expansion

ID BOISE — Sen. Joe Stegner is pushing an expansion proposal for the Capitol that would add wings to each end of the century-old building. Another proposal to remodel the vacant county courthouse across the street and use it as an annex is also being considered.

Fire destroys bar

AL DAPHNE — A fire destroyed Judge Roy Bean's, a popular bar and concert venue that had operated since 1946. Singers Jimmy Buffett, Emmy Lou Harris and Jerry Jeff Walker were among those who performed at the old wooden building with a big fenced-in yard, where customers were greeted by a maitre d' and goat. Both animals survived the fire. The cause of the blaze wasn't immediately clear.



Wedding by the letters Dressed as the letter Q, kindergarten Seth Reid, leads the letter U, otherwise known as Danni Baham, down an aisle lined with their classmates during a wedding ceremony for the two letters Friday at Independence Elementary School in Independence, La. The kindergarten wedding was complete with a choir, cake and flowers.



Limber lady Kong Chummei performs in front of Hart Elementary school students Tuesday in Bakersfield, Calif. Chummei is a part of the traveling China Star Acrobats Company from Mainland China and puts on shows all over the United States each year.



Artist's work brings in big bucks In this photo released by Doyle New York, a photograph of the painting "A Bold Bluff," by artist Casius Marcellus Coolidge, is shown Tuesday in New York. A pair of paintings from the famed series depicting dogs playing poker sold for \$590,400 at auction on Tuesday. The winning bid set a new auction record for Coolidge, whose previous top sale was \$74,000 for a painting at a Sotheby's auction in 1999, said Alan Fause, director of paintings at Doyle New York, which handled the Tuesday sale. The winning bidder was a private collector from New York.



Shining their machines Patrons at a coin-operated car wash in Killeen, Texas, put the finishing touches on their cars as the sun blankets the area with midday light Tuesday.



Facing the wall Excelsior Education Center student Cesar Lopez III, whose sister and brother are serving in the armed forces, rapels after the 24-foot rock-climbing wall during the Army of One Interactive Tour on Tuesday in Victorville, Calif. The tour visited the Victor Valley Community College campus for two days and featured interactive video games; a 3-D and audio interactive exhibit; and the rock-climbing wall.

Children recovering

FL INVERNESS — Seven children removed from a home amid allegations of torture are enrolled in public schools and adjusting to foster care, officials say.

They even have grown a little and gained a substantial amount of weight, Citrus County Sheriff's Office spokeswoman Gail Tierney said.

The children's health has rebounded since Jan. 27, when they were placed in foster homes in groups of two or three, Tierney said.

They have received medical checkups and detectives check daily on their welfare. The children began attending area schools last week.

Their schoolmates are aware of the circumstances and have been protective of them, Tierney said.

The children, ages 12 to 17, have been in state custody since late last month. Authorities say their parents, John and Linda Dollar, were taken into custody after being arrested, shocking them, yanking their nails out, confining them and leaving them malnourished.

The couple each face charges of aggravated child abuse and more charges are pending, officials said. They are being extradited from Utah, where authorities said they fled fearing arrest.

Just a little 'blinky'

RI PROVIDENCE — A little magnetic "blinky," favored by teens and clubbers, stirred up an intense, multiagency investigation because some Providence officers believed it was a sophisticated eavesdropping device planted inside the police station.

Three ranking officers took it to a businessman who deals in surveillance devices. When told it was a high-tech listening tool, the officers waited several days before turning it over to their union and the police administration. Police Chief Dean M. Esserman was handed an envelope containing the device — now in pieces — and he immediately called the state police to investigate.

Over the weekend, the device went through state police laboratories in Rhode Island, Massachusetts and Connecticut, plus the Boston bureau of the FBI. They all came up with the same conclusion: It's just a little blinky.

Guess what, you're dead

CA PLEASANTON — When word spread that Mary Lawson had passed away at age 84, no one was more upset than Lawson herself, who was very much alive and enjoying a historical novel on CD.

An employee at Lawson's doctor's office called to inform her that, according to the Social Security Administration, she had died Jan. 11.

So how had she managed to keep her subsequent appointments? The employee laughed, and so did Lawson — until she realized the pitfalls associated with no longer being alive. She found her bank account frozen and her monthly \$832 So-

cial Security check missing. Her doctors were told they couldn't claim Medicare for a corpse.

After a few stressful days, Lawson was relieved to learn that she was officially alive. The government acknowledged the mistake, resurrected her and promised to fix any problems that had cropped up while Lawson wasn't really dead.

"I'm the healthiest ghost you've ever seen," Lawson declared.

Lowell Kepke, a Social Security spokesman, confirmed that Lawson had been reported dead but said it wasn't clear why.

New recycling campaign

RI PROVIDENCE — A new ad campaign will ask Rhode Islanders to reuse or recycle plastic grocery bags from retail stores. The Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corp. says it spends nearly \$1 million a year picking up bags that blow off of trucks delivered to a landfill in Johnston. The \$250,000 television and newspaper ad campaign is aimed at persuading residents to help combat the problem.

Center seeks nurses

NC FAYETTEVILLE — Cape Fear Valley Medical Center is sending recruiters to Canada to help reduce its nursing shortage.

Five nurses from Canada have been hired and several more are interested, the hospital says. The effort has helped reduce 141 full-time openings as of last May to just 57 in January.

Financial help for city

CA SAN DIEGO — City officials hired Lynn Turner, a former Securities and Exchange Commission accounting chief, to help sort out San Diego's troubled finances and complete overdue audits. The city is also contracting with Kroll Inc., a firm specializing in forensic accounting and litigation. San Diego has been hobbled by a pension deficit estimated at \$1.37 billion.

Justices skeptical

AZ PHOENIX — Arizona Supreme Court justices expressed skepticism as a lawyer for the state argued that alleged racial profiling isn't a legal basis to challenge traffic stops. The court is considering whether minority drug defendants are entitled to have an expert appointed for pretrial proceedings to support defense claims of racial profiling in traffic stops on Interstate 17 in Yavapai County.

Cuts to reading program

OH COLUMBUS — The reading program that once was Gov. Bob Taft's top priority policy has been folded into a new reading office in the state Education Department. Taft's \$51 billion budget proposal released last week did not contain funding specific to Ohio Reads grants, as the past three Taft budgets have. A separate budget for supporting Ohio Reads' tutors also is being cut by 8 percent.

Stories and photos from wires services

FACES

Kid Rock arrested at Nashville strip club

Kid Rock was arrested Wednesday by Nashville, Tenn., police on charges that he punched a disc jockey at a strip club.

The 34-year-old rapper was released after posting a \$3,000 bond on a charge of simple assault, a misdemeanor punishable by up to a year in jail.

Authorities said he was charged after a 3 a.m. altercation at Christie's Cabaret near downtown Nashville.

"Inside the establishment there was a squabble concerning, I guess, the selection of music," said Nashville police Sgt. James Smith.

Television footage from outside the club showed the DJ, identified as Jay Campos, with a red mark on his face and holding his broken eyeglasses.

Nicolas Cage, wife expecting

Actor Nicolas Cage and his wife, Alice Kim, are expecting their first child, his publicist said Tuesday in Los Angeles.

"I can definitely confirm that," said spokeswoman Annett Wolz.

She declined to provide additional details.

The couple married in July. It was the third marriage for Cage, 41, and the first for his new wife, whom he met when he visited a Los Angeles restaurant where she was working as a waitress.

Cage, star of the recent hit "National Treasure," won the best actor Oscar for "Leaving Las Vegas." He has a son from a previous relationship.

Crazy about sharp-dressed men

Katie Couric is going crazy for sharp-dressed men. Esquire magazine is launching a nationwide search for "The Best-Dressed Real Man in America," with the five finalists to appear on the "Today" show, co-hosted by Couric.

Beginning March 15, Esquire will sift through contestants in 10 U.S. cities. A panel of editors and "local celebrities" will judge who is a cut above the rest.

"Right now, men in the U.S. are showing more originality in personal style than ever before," said Esquire Editor-in-Chief David Granger.

The five finalists will appear on the NBC morning show in September. Viewers will be able to vote for their choice through Esquire's Web site.

A long-awaited Grammy for N'Dour

"Perseverance always pays," said Youssou N'Dour of his first Grammy Award — for "Egypt," the winner for best contemporary world music album.

"It was a spiritual album. ... I tried something different and have made a leap forward in my career," N'Dour was quoted Tuesday as telling Senegal's government-run Le Soleil daily.

"This is the only thing I lacked in my long career," he said.

A superstar in his Western nation of Senegal, N'Dour rose to prominence in the United States and Europe in the 1980s with his country's homegrown popular music, mbalax.

The music is a mix of the traditional drumming of Senegal's Wolof ethnic group, African-rooted Cuban sounds and American soul and rock.

Introductions by Destiny's Child

Say Shaq's name.

Destiny's Child will make the player introductions at the NBA All-Star Game Sunday, the basketball league announced Tuesday.

Country singers LeAnn Rimes and Big & Rich were also announced as the game's halftime performers for the game in Denver.

On Saturday, as part of the dunk contest and 3-point shootout festivities, Kelly Clarkson and the Goo Goo Dolls will perform.



Destiny's Child

Photos and stories from The Associated Press



Rappers The Game, left, and 50 Cent perform at the Vibe awards, held in November in Santa Monica, Calif.

From drug dealer to No. 1

The Game's debut 'The Documentary' makes a case for West Coast rap's return

BY RYAN PEARSON

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Myth-making can be as important as musicianship in the gangster rap world.

Tupac Shakur was known as the thoughtful son of a Black Panther activist. Eazy-E was a hustler who once sold tapes out of the trunk of his car.

And so The Game, who carefully studied their careers, introduces himself with this tale: Raised largely in foster care and beat up daily when he wore blood red to Crip-dominated Compton High School, he still managed to nab a basketball scholarship to Washington State — only to be kicked out for selling drugs on campus.

Uninterested in music at the time, he turned to stealing cars and other crimes, but was shot five times in 2001 when thieves invaded his drug-selling spot.

Twenty-three hours later, he says, "I woke up from a coma and I had the gift of rap."

Appearances on underground mixtapes rapidly led to a deal with super-producer Dr. Dre, who has tutored

The Game and oversaw his debut, "The Documentary." Released last month, it's expected to be among the year's top-sellers. The CD tops this week's Billboard album chart.

The release includes a collaboration with 50 Cent, "How We Do." Another song, "Westside Story," gives the short version of Game's life: "Sold crack, got jacked. Got shot, came back, jumped on Dre's back. Payback! Homie, I'm bringing C-A back."

The C-A in question is California, where the seminal gangster rap scene has slumped in popularity recently as Dre looked elsewhere for talent (finding Eminem in Detroit and 50 Cent in New York) while pioneers like Ice Cube eased out of music.

The calculating, heavily tattooed 25-year-old Game, always ready with a snarl for videos and publicity photos, said he pieced together his style and persona by listening to Cube's "AmeriKKKa's Most Wanted," Tupac's "All Eyez On Me" and other rap landmarks.

"I tried to take everybody who I thought was legendary, who I thought had classic material, and combine 'em all," he said during a break between filming an independent movie and a meeting with Interscope

Records chairman Jimmy Iovine.

"I took Jay-Z's cockiness and his swagger. I took Pac's ambition and his work ethic. I took [Notorious] B.I.G.'s wordplay and his metaphorical climate. I took Snoop Dogg's gang-banging and California lifestyle. I took Kool G Rap and Ice Cube and their flow."

But Game, whose real name is Jayceon Taylor, doesn't even think of himself as primarily a musician.

"I consider myself to be a businessman," he said. "Doing music is a branch on the tree. The other branches are filmmaking and endorsements."

A Reebok sneaker deal is in the works, as is a movie, "Millionaire Boys Club." Michael K. Williams (Omar from HBO's "The Wire") and Shari Headley ("Coming to America") star alongside Game in the gangster tale and love story he describes as "a cross between 'Menace II Society' and 'Love Jones.'" The film is currently in production; Game plans to shoot it to studios as a theatrical release.

Next up, the 6-foot-4 rapper — nicknamed by his grandmother for being "game" to try anything as a child — is trying to get back on his mentor, Dr. Dre

into basketball. He went head-to-head with pros like Rafer Alston at last summer's Rucker Park tournament in New York. And as with his rap career, there are no plans to start small: He's aiming for a 10-day NBA contract.

"You ask anybody about my game, you'll see," he said.

What Game won't do is turn on Dre. He slows down and drops his voice when speaking of the legendary producer, whom he idolized along with other members of the pioneering Compton-based group N.W.A. When he was 10, he watched group members hand out gifts in his neighborhood and talk about his community on television.

"It was just beautiful. Everybody was feeling them," he said.

"I just felt like Compton was all one big family. I really appreciated it."

Now, having moved to a condominium in Beverly Hills, Game considers Dre both a musical mentor and a life-saver, for pulling him out of his dangerous Compton life with a recording contract.

"He brings the best outta me. I owe everything to Dre," he said. "If it wasn't for Dre, I'd probably be dead right now."

YOUR MONEY

Fix is in: Home improvements help

Key is to view remodeling as reinvestment

BY JAY MACDONALD
Bankrate.com

If your remote control is stuck on Home & Garden Television, if you recognize Bob Vila's voice sight unseen, and you're on a first-name basis with the clerks at Home Depot, chances are you've caught the home-improvement bug.

You're not alone. Today, Americans are sprucing up everything from Arizona tract homes and New England saltboxes to Florida condos. But when it comes time to sell, will you recoup the cost of that new master suite, state-of-the-art kitchen or demerced attic loft? The time to find out is before you pull out the power saw or contract for a home makeover.

Money spent on remodeling is reinvested in your house, and if you finance correctly, the interest on payments can be tax-deductible. Fortunately, several financing options for home renovations are readily available today.

If you have the equity to match your total project cost, a traditional home-equity loan might be your best bet. If your improvements include energy-efficient upgrades, you might also qualify for energy-saving loans through local utilities or related businesses.



This week, neighbors of writer Ernest Hemingway's former home, Hemingway House, in Ketchum, Idaho, announced that they want to buy the property, have it moved, then donate the structure back to the original owners, The Nature Conservancy, to settle a dispute regarding public access to the home. Were this house on the market, however, the back deck likely would help it attract potential buyers. According to the 2004 survey by Remodeling magazine that compares the cost of construction to likely return on investment at resale, a \$7,000 deck addition will on average return 86.7 percent of your investment.

What can you expect to recoup for renovations to this old house? According to the 2004 survey by Remodeling magazine that compares the cost of construction to likely return on investment (ROI) at resale, minor kitchen remodels yielded 92.9 percent of your investment, followed closely by new siding at 92.8 percent.

Here's what's hot in remodels, room by room:

■ Kitchens typically suffer the most wear and tear. And because kitchens tend to follow style and color trends, they often seem dated

sooner than other rooms in the home. The most popular minor improvements include adding functionality with dual sinks and cooking stations, and cosmetic improvements such as under-cabinet lighting, marble or granite countertops and ceramic tile backsplashes. To add space, consider a walk-in pantry or breakfast alcove.

■ Bathrooms have changed the most during the past century. Today, homes that have more than one sell faster and fetch a higher price. A mid-range bath remodel (less than \$10,000) placed third in the 2004 survey with a ROI of 90.1

percent. Popular renovations include skylights, couples' walk-in showers, glass block windows and vaulted ceilings.

■ Bedrooms are always listed first in real estate descriptions for good reason: We spend nearly half our lives there. If you can put one in your attic, you're likely to recoup 82.7 percent of the estimated \$35,000 cost of installation.

■ Decks expand your living space, and you rarely live beyond your home larger, be it exterior or interior renovations. A \$7,000 deck addition placed fourth in ROI at 86.7 percent.

■ Windows quickly and inexpensively add to a home's volume, and volume is the buzzword in real estate these days. So it's no surprise that your return on new glass is excellent, whether you're contemplating a mid-range window replacement (less than \$10,000) at 84.5 percent or an upscale replacement (\$15,000-plus) at 83.7 percent.

Your return on your remodel likely will depend as much on how well it fits the period and scale of your house as how much it adds to its functionality.

Click and Clack

Tom and Ray Magliozzi

This Sable can't warm up owner

Dear Tom and Ray:

I've got a peculiar problem. My 1999 Mercury Sable's heater has been putting out less and less hot air for the past few years. This year, there was no heat. I flushed the cooling system; still nothing. Then I flushed the heater core, and now I have heat, but only at highway speeds. At idle, you can feel it cool right back down to nothing. Any thoughts? I'm thinking it's the water pump. Can you help out? My wife and kids refuse to ride with me anymore ... on second thought, maybe that's OK! — Mike

RAY: My brother got his wife and kids to stop riding with him, too. But he didn't have to give up his heat to do it. Giving up his reflexes and judgment seemed to do the trick.

TOM: I think it's your heater core, Mike. Flushing won't help once it's really plugged up. I'm going to guess that the water pump is OK. It's turned by the car that runs off the engine so, at idle speed, it's supposed to pump more slowly than at highway speed. At normal idle speed, it just can't overcome the gunk that's clogging up your heater core.

RAY: The good news is that the heater core is easy to get to on this car. The bad news is that it's only easy to get to once you remove the entire dashboard.

TOM: So, you're looking at \$600. Mike. A big chunk of that is labor. You have to make a decision here: Do you want to be frozen out by your car or frozen out by your family? Good luck deciding, brother.

Got a question about cars? Write to Click and Clack in care of this newspaper, or e-mail us by visiting the Car Talk section of cars.com on the World Wide Web. Distributed by King Features Syndicate Inc.

WEDNESDAY'S MARKET SUMMARY

INDEXES				
52-week High	Low	Net Chg	% Chg	52-week Low
10,858.8	5,796.48	10,858.88	+2.32	+4.31
3,823.58	2,423.46	3,823.68	+7.28	+3.41
356.11	259.08	356.09	+2.81	+2.81
6,211.33	3,753.05	6,211.33	+3.94	+7.75
1,526.26	1,158.74	1,526.26	+1.62	+2.44
1,526.26	1,158.74	1,526.26	+1.62	+2.44
1,217.10	1,068.72	1,217.10	+3.22	+4.01
548.29	359.50	548.29	+4.38	+4.38
666.11	519.55	666.11	+2.62	+1.95
12,093.46	10,268.52	12,093.46	+12.59	+31.62

NYSE				
Most Active (\$1 or more)	Vol	Net Chg	% Chg	52-week Low
Exxon	362,556	24.35	+27	+1.01
Pfizer	230,320	3.14	+59	+2.58
Alcoa	180,887	98.48	+14	+1.44
Johnson & Johnson	180,887	12.7	+37	+3.00
General Motors	168,633	43.15	+5	+0.12
Wells Fargo	121,454	17.18	+10	+0.58
McDonald's	102,795	15.73	+27	+2.12
Walmart	100,979	21.86	+3	+0.14
United Technologies	15,841	26.89	+8	+0.30
Yahoo!	14,634	31.7	+36	+2.85

KEY DEFENSE STOCKS				
Net Chg	Vol	FE	PE	NAV
Boeing	1.37	69.05	33	+0.8
Airbus	1.09	39.06	33	+0.8
Raytheon	1.09	39.06	33	+0.8
General Dynamics	1.09	39.06	33	+0.8
Lockheed Martin	1.09	39.06	33	+0.8
Northrop Grumman	1.09	39.06	33	+0.8
Boeing	1.09	39.06	33	+0.8
Airbus	1.09	39.06	33	+0.8
Raytheon	1.09	39.06	33	+0.8
General Dynamics	1.09	39.06	33	+0.8
Lockheed Martin	1.09	39.06	33	+0.8
Northrop Grumman	1.09	39.06	33	+0.8
Boeing	1.09	39.06	33	+0.8
Airbus	1.09	39.06	33	+0.8
Raytheon	1.09	39.06	33	+0.8
General Dynamics	1.09	39.06	33	+0.8
Lockheed Martin	1.09	39.06	33	+0.8
Northrop Grumman	1.09	39.06	33	+0.8

KEY MUTUAL FUNDS				
Net Chg	Vol	NAV	NAV	YTD
Fidelity Investor: Global	2.07	26.01	26.01	+0.16
Fidelity Investor: Growth	2.07	26.01	26.01	+0.16
Fidelity Investor: Divd Growth	2.07	26.01	26.01	+0.16
Fidelity Investor: Mid-Cap	2.07	26.01	26.01	+0.16
Fidelity Investor: Divd Growth	2.07	26.01	26.01	+0.16
Fidelity Investor: Divd Growth	2.07	26.01	26.01	+0.16
Fidelity Investor: Divd Growth	2.07	26.01	26.01	+0.16
Fidelity Investor: Divd Growth	2.07	26.01	26.01	+0.16
Fidelity Investor: Divd Growth	2.07	26.01	26.01	+0.16
Fidelity Investor: Divd Growth	2.07	26.01	26.01	+0.16
Fidelity Investor: Divd Growth	2.07	26.01	26.01	+0.16
Fidelity Investor: Divd Growth	2.07	26.01	26.01	+0.16
Fidelity Investor: Divd Growth	2.07	26.01	26.01	+0.16
Fidelity Investor: Divd Growth	2.07	26.01	26.01	+0.16
Fidelity Investor: Divd Growth	2.07	26.01	26.01	+0.16
Fidelity Investor: Divd Growth	2.07	26.01	26.01	+0.16

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Dollar/Buy	\$1,340.98
British pound (sterling)	\$1.94
Japanese yen (Feb. 18)	100.00
South Korean won (Feb. 17)	1,020.00
Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	2,799.84
Denmark (Krone)	6.56
Egypt (Pound)	8.116
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7994
Hungary (Forint)	166.30
Israel (Shekel)	1.3635
Japan (Yen)	109.39
Kuwait (Dinar)	2.9369
Norway (Krone)	6.95
Philippines (Peso)	49.05
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.58
Singapore (Dollar)	1.5403
South Korea (Won)	1,026.10
Switzerland (Franc)	1.112
Thailand (Baht)	38.37
United Arab Emirates (Dirham)	3.67

NYSE	
Most Active (\$1 or more)	Vol
Exxon	362,556
Pfizer	230,320
Alcoa	180,887
Johnson & Johnson	180,887
General Motors	168,633
Wells Fargo	121,454
McDonald's	102,795
Walmart	100,979
United Technologies	15,841
Yahoo!	14,634

NYSE	
Most Active (\$1 or more)	Vol
Exxon	362,556
Pfizer	230,320
Alcoa	180,887
Johnson & Johnson	180,887
General Motors	168,633
Wells Fargo	121,454
McDonald's	102,795
Walmart	100,979
United Technologies	15,841
Yahoo!	14,634

PRECIOUS METALS

London Gold	
Gold	\$427.10
Silver	\$7.31

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	
Discount rate	5.50
3-month bill	5.50
6-month bill	5.50
1-year bill	5.50
30-year bond	5.50
Source: The Associated Press	

cents and Sensibility

Money tip of the day

Resources on tax terms

BY KNUIGHT MYERS

Knight Ridder/Tribune

When dealing with your income tax return, understanding the lexicon is often half the battle.

To help remove the confusion from tax terminology, several Web sites provide tax glossaries that break down the jargon:

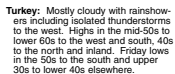
■ Bankrate.com (www.bankrate.com/bnm/tax/edit/definitions/definitions-taxestax1.asp) provides tax definitions designed to help filers become more fluent with tax terms.

■ H&R Block (www.taxcut.com/taxtips/tax-terms/glossic.htm) features good list of commonly used tax words

■ Internal Revenue Service (www.irs.gov/taxtips/tax-terms/glossic.htm) has A-to-Z glossary

■ Investor Words (www.investorwords.com/tax.htm) has an extensive glossary list

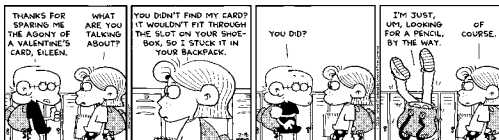
■ TaxGaga.com (www.taxgaga.com/pages/c-tax-abbreviations-glossary.html) offers straightforward tax definitions, sometimes in a conversational manner.



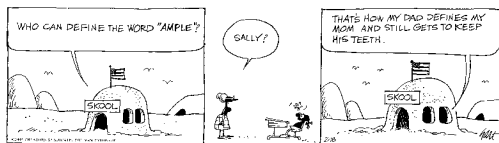
Check our Relocation Guide
every Saturday to find
tailors at your new station.

STARS AND STRIPES
Your Hometown Newspaper

Fotrot



B.C.



Baby Blues



Spider Man



Blondie



Dilbert



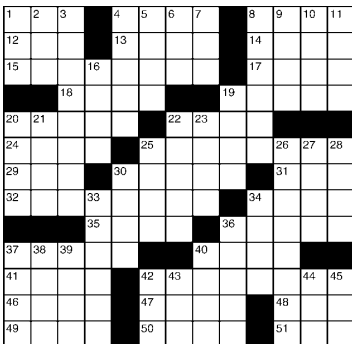
Hagar



Garfield



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



Across

- 1 Billboards
- 4 Karate maneuver
- 8 Faux pas
- 12 Debtor's letters
- 14 Firetruck necessity
- 15 Goalie, e.g.
- 17 Hold the scepter
- 18 Suitable
- 19 Duck down
- 20 Tinkerbell, for one
- 22 Soothing ointment
- 24 Formerly
- 25 Translate, in a way
- 29 "A Chorus Line" song
- 30 Emanations
- 31 Bullring bravo
- 32 Courtier
- 34 Child's play
- 35 "—the Fokkers"
- 36 Starts
- 37 Dangerous swarm
- 40 Fix, in a sense
- 41 Sheltered
- 42 Last page?
- 46 Grad rags?
- 47 It ends with 42-Across
- 48 Diamond arbor
- 49 Fax
- 50 Exile site
- 51 Exod., Lev., ...

Down

- 1 Succor
- 2 The buck stops here
- 3 Serves the purpose
- 4 Shrewd
- 5 Stash
- 6 Praise in verse
- 7 Standard
- 8 Scampi ingredient
- 9 Ear-splitting
- 10 Castaways' home
- 11 Juror, theoretically
- 16 Green land
- 19 Yale alumni
- 20 Comestibles
- 21 Mrs. Shakespeare
- 22 Jaunty chapeau
- 23 Rent — agency
- 25 Frank Herbert book
- 26 Sweetheart
- 27 Verve
- 28 Agents, for short
- 30 Census statistics
- 33 Hang in the balance
- 34 Junk e-mail
- 36 La Scala offering
- 37 Jesters
- 38 Lotion additive
- 39 Stitched
- 40 Strikebreaker
- 42 Turn red?
- 43 Wriggler
- 44 Ostrich's kin
- 45 Turntable abbr.

Answer to Previous Puzzle



2-18

CRYPTOQUIP

HJSEI XGNX HRNXYDRM
 DSEG FRPFJR NZL WNEDNWR
 NDXSMXM: "XGR GNKR

NZL XGR GNKR-IZPXM."
 Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF YOU'RE OUT
 LOOKING FOR VULTURES, THEN I RECKON
 YOU'RE ON A SCAVENGER HUNT.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: G equals H

DEI cars not the only contenders at Daytona this year

BY PAUL NEWBERRY

The Associated Press

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — Picking a favorite at Daytona used to be easy: Just look for the DEI logo.

Not anymore.

Sure, defending Daytona 500 champion Dale Earnhardt Jr. and two-time winner Michael Waltrip figure to run up front in Thursday's 150-mile qualifying races, which set most of the field for Sunday's big race.

But the list of potential contenders runs much longer than Dale Earnhardt Inc., the restrictor plate-savvy team that has dominated the 2½-mile, high-banked oval for several years.

Dale Jarrett already has clinched a spot on the pole. Jeff Gordon, Jimmie Johnson and the rest of the Hendrick Motorsports drivers are running strong. And, in Wednesday's final practice, Jeremy Mayfield turned in the fastest speed.

"It was a matter of time before somebody found out what DEI was doing," Tony Stewart said. "Whether Hendrick has found it or not or if they found something else, they're pretty stout right now."

Waltrip won his first 500 in 2001, the same day Earnhardt's father and DEI's namesake — a seven-time NASCAR Cup champion — was involved in a fatal crash on the final turn.

Two years later, Waltrip won again in a rain-shortened 500. Then it was Junior's turn in Victory Lane, giving DEI its third victory in four years.

Adding to their domination, Waltrip or Earnhardt has won a qualifying race each of the last three years. Clearly, DEI knows



Jimmie Johnson, right, helps his crew push his Chevrolet back to the garage after a practice run Wednesday at Daytona International Speedway. Johnson will be starting the Daytona 500 on the front row.

how to run fast with the horsepower-sapping plates that NASCAR mandates at its two fastest tracks, Daytona and Talladega.

Apparently, some of those lessons have rubbed off on their competitors.

"There are more guys that have a shot this year than in recent years," Stewart said.

The top two spots in the 43-car field were determined in qualifying last weekend. Jarrett, a three-time 500 winner, posted the fastest speed, with Johnson claiming the outside of the front row.

The rest of the starting order

will be determined by the two 150-mile qualifying races, though the top 35 teams from 2004 are guaranteed spots in Sunday's race. Four more drivers also got in through their qualifying speeds last weekend.

On Thursday, there will be 18 drivers vying for the last four spots — two from each race.

For part-time racers such as Stanton Barrett, it won't be easy to squeeze in.

"We have a good sponsor, but the funding of other teams is so significant," he said. "It should be fun. It's going to be good experi-

ence, even if I don't make the race."

Hermie Sadler, older brother of Cup star Elliott Sadler, hopes to get in, too.

"There are going to be eight or nine cars in our race going for two spots," the elder Sadler said. "That's the reality of it, so we've got to be really, really smart about getting where we need to get as far as track position. We need to get in front of the cars we're racing against."

NASCAR has thrown another obstacle into the mix this year, adding 10 laps and 25 miles to

each of the qualifying races. With smaller gas tanks already forcing everyone to make a pit stop at the shorter distance, the extended race could mean two pit stop strategies for some teams.

"We'll probably give the race 15 to 20 laps to settle out," Hermie Sadler said. "We might have to take some chances, especially with that last pit stop. It's unlikely we're going to drive by everybody with where we're starting."

Ricky Rudd expects some hard racing Thursday, but probably not a whole lot of crazy moves — at least not from the drivers already in the big race.

"Now, the guys that are not in field, you'll see anything and everything coming from them," Rudd said. "If they've got to make an aggressive move to make the cut, they'll do it."

Kyle Petty wishes NASCAR had gotten rid of the qualifying races altogether, rather than add another 10 laps.

"I don't see a need for the 125s," Petty said, referring to the former distance. "These guys qualified. They work all winter long. They get their cars ready. They come down here and qualify and it should be like any other race."

Stewart is downright ambivalent about the whole thing.

"I don't even understand how it works," he said. "To be honest, I don't really care. I know I'm in. Earnhardt and Waltrip are in, too. And, despite dismal qualifying runs and some disappointing practice speeds, it's too soon to count out DEI."

From what I've seen of the 8 car (Earnhardt) and from I've seen of the 15 car (Waltrip), they seem like the strongest cars," Gordon said. "But I don't think that we can't beat them."

FRONT PROTECTIVE BUMPER



The Ibis Tek Front Protective Bumper (FPB) attached to the front of the vehicle enables the HMMWV to easily push or smash objects in its path without any damage being done to the front end. The FPB has been impact tested to 35 MPH without damaging the HMMWV or the bumper. For those HMMWV's with a front extension kit to open the roof with a brush guard attached we will include a modification kit at no additional charge, just let us know.

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More tire problems plague practice

BY JENNA FRYER

The Associated Press

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — Goodyear officials spent the first day of Daytona 500 practice scrambling to solve the second tire problem of Speed Weeks.

Six drivers had problems with tread separating on their right tires during practice Wednesday. When similar problems caused the tires to fall apart during practice for an exhibition race last week, Goodyear officials pulled about 300 tires out of their rotation as a precaution.

They pulled several more Wednesday, and Goodyear spokesman Greg Stucker said seven tires were being flown to the company's laboratory in Akron, Ohio, for testing.

"We haven't really determined that there's anything in common causing the particular problems," Stucker said.

He added that Goodyear will work closely with each team to ensure cars have the best setup for Thursday's qualifying races.

"I don't know what's going on now," car owner Ray Evernham said. "There's a problem right now. But one thing we usually see here at Daytona is problems crop

Racing notes

up early and then they go away as the week goes on. They are usually forgotten by race day."

Indy blues: A handful of NASCAR drivers took notice when the start of the Indianapolis 500 was moved back an hour, making it almost impossible for them to compete at the Brickyard and in NASCAR's Coca-Cola 600 on the same day.

Robby Gordon, Tony Stewart and John Andretti have all attempted "The Double" in recent years. It was a tough task even when the Indy race began at 11 a.m. (EST) because it was still a scramble to make it back to North Carolina in time for the NASCAR event.

Now that the race will start at noon, Gordon said Indy will be hard-pressed to get any NASCAR drivers in the field.

"That's the dumbest decision they could have made," Gordon said. "One of the draws of that race these days is seeing what NASCAR stars try to run the double, and I just don't understand why they would take that element

out of it by moving the start time."

Indy officials want to attract a larger television audience with the later start.

Tony Stewart echoed Gordon's thoughts. Just last showing up last year on Bump Day was a significant attention as his mere presence at the track added excitement to an otherwise non-eventful day.

"I wasn't planning on doing it again, but it's got to be the dumbest thing I've ever seen Indianapolis Motor Speedway do since I've been around," Stewart said. "I don't know what their theory was on that. I thought it helped them to have guys doing both races."

Gordon said Indy officials should have moved the race to Memorial Day instead of trying to draw viewers on the same day as a NASCAR race.

"That would be the better move for the Indy 500," said Gordon, a former IRL racer. "Not only would they be on the same TV that day, but all the NASCAR drivers would have the day off and could consider entering the 500."

Really, though you'd get a lot more cars on the first race, TV viewers on Monday. You never know who might give it a try."

Next: A tidy solution to a messy problem

TEXT, FROM BACK PAGE

ment players who will skate under a salary cap system that lowers total player payrolls from a current 76 percent of league revenues to something closer to 50 percent.

If the course is taken, this season's lockout likely would turn into next season's strike while the NHL tries to reopen with replacement players.

"We will continue to explore and pursue all available options in order to achieve a successful resolution," Bettman said. "Virtually immediately, we as an organization at the league level and our clubs are going to begin planning for a 2005-2006 season.... We've obviously pursue a collective bargaining agreement with the players' association. That remains our goal. But obviously... we will explore all of our options, and we haven't done that to date."

The union could go to court or the U.S. National Labor Relations Board to challenge the impasse, although the NLRB would have no jurisdiction over the NHL's five Canadian teams. If the challenge is successful, the union could prevent the league from resuming play, possibly forcing Bettman back to the bargaining table and dragging the dispute deep into next season.

Another possibility is that the union dissolves, a process known as "decertification," and players then bring an antitrust action against the owners for collusion. The NFL Players' Association successfully decertified against the NFL back in 1989, forcing the league back to the bargaining table for a deal that the union deemed favorable.

Another further scenario has the players, or a media mogul such as Rupert Murdoch, starting a hockey league to replace the NHL. By next summer, 80 percent of the players' individual contracts binding them to their teams and to the current labor negotiations — will have expired, allowing those players to join another hockey league or form their own. Murdoch successfully created a rugby league in England last year, and he has ambitions to go for his global media empire, which includes satellite television, Fox Sports, 20th Century Fox movie studios and more.

"That's the area where the uncharted waters goes in both directions," said J.P. Barry, the Calgary-based managing director of IMG hockey, with 70 NHL players under contract including Daniel Alfredsson, Jaromir Jagr and Mats Sundin. "Let's say Rupert Murdoch and Bill Gates all of a sudden start a league and promise players contracts and conditions better than the uncertainty that they have now. These are just possibilities, but you never know."

Certainly nothing that happened over the past several days suggests any solution will be easily attained. Both sides had made major concessions in face-to-face meetings starting in Washington on Sunday, moving to a Sheraton hotel at Niagara Falls, N.Y., on Monday and concluding with a series of faxed letters between their respective headquarters in New York and Toronto on Tuesday night.

After opposing any salary control system for months, the players on Sunday signaled that they might accept a cap, which they set at \$52 million per team in a meeting with the league in Niagara Falls. Bettman countered with a \$42.5 million offer Tuesday night, and the union responded a few hours later with \$49 million. The owners in turn dropped their insistence that overall player salaries and benefits not exceed a certain percentage of league-wide revenue.

Though the sides appeared only \$6.5 million apart on a salary cap, that number multiplied across 30 teams is nearly \$200 million, which Bettman said would have continued to cause the league to lose money.

He said that even at \$42.5 million, NHL owners collectively probably would have lost money for at least two more years, although some stability may have been achieved beyond that.

The agreement we made was we would take the economic risk of agreeing to a fixed cap unrelated to revenues. But there was only so much of that risk that we were prepared to absorb," Bettman said. "And the higher the cap, the more risk we took.... We couldn't be in the 50s or the high 40s."

Goodenow said the players compromised on a number of fronts, including a 24 percent



NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman said the league "will explore all of our options."

across-the-board rollback on all existing player contracts that would have saved owners \$500 million over two years and \$1 billion in the long run.

"We have said before that they do not want to earn a dollar more than they are worth," Goodenow said Wednesday. "The players wanted to reach a fair agreement, but they never had a negotiating partner."

This is the third work stoppage for the NHL, which postponed 30 games because of a 10-day strike in 1992. Owners locked out the players over labor differences for 163 days in 1994-95, which cut the regular season from 84 games to 48. The league was able to bounce back, but still mount a credible Stanley Cup race, but the loss of a season could be far worse for the already-hobbled NHL, which has been struggling against a minuscule television audience in the United States and growing fan apathy.

That returns to the original question: What's next?

"The game is a mess right now," Washington Capitals forward Jeff Halpern said.

And while both sides dig in for another standoff, a third party can do nothing but watch. "The fans are still left holding their hands in the air, wondering what's next," said Doug Siler, a Buffalo, N.Y.,-based fan who has organized a campaign to express the fan's frustration during the NHL lockout.

"The fans are still left holding their hands in the air, wondering what's next," said Doug Siler, a Buffalo, N.Y.,-based fan who has organized a campaign to express the fan's frustration during the NHL lockout. "Both players and owners have been preparing for this lockout for years.... I think they will play hockey next year, but with some major changes. I think a lot of players will break with the union and play hockey next year. The owners are going to bust the union. The players are in a no-win situation. The owners have to take drastic measures with 60 of the teams losing money."

Lemieux: Star says small cities need a better deal

LEMIEUX, FROM BACK PAGE

canceled the 2004-05 season Wednesday there would be last-minute talks agreement to save the season — and, in his mind, the sport.

"This morning, I thought the two sides would get together before the press conference and make a deal... that, at the end of the day, there would be too much of a stake for both sides," Lemieux said Wednesday. "But I knew and understood throughout this process that it would be a long battle."

Lemieux is one of the best players in modern American pro sports history, but there never was a chance he would side with the players despite being the NHL's best-known star.

"A few years ago, I thought the owners were making a lot of money and were hiding some under the table," he said. "But then I got on this side and saw the losses this league was accumulating."

Lemieux tried several weeks ago to secretly move along a deal, meeting in Toronto with Maple Leafs owner Larry Tanenbaum and player Teemu Selanne to bridge the gap between the league and its players' union. He was unsuccessful.

"It's been difficult," Lemieux said. "I don't want to say the wrong things on either side and that's why I've chosen to stay away from the negotiations."

Lemieux said he would be damaged by shutting down for a full season, but is confident it will make a strong return with rules changes designed to make the sport more fan-friendly and entertaining — something he has sought for years.

"The game is going to suffer for a couple of years and it's going to take time to win back our fans and rebuild the business," he said. "And the players are going to have to share in that."

The labor impasse couldn't come at a more critical time for the Penguins, two-time Stanley Cup champions who enjoyed considerable on-ice success from 1991 to 2001 until soaring salary costs forced Lemieux to get rid of all of the team's stars except himself.

"I couldn't afford myself," he said, referring to the below-market \$5 million salary he paid himself last season.

With attendance down three consecutive losing seasons amid the sell-off of players such as Jaromir Jagr and Alexei Kovalev, Lemieux said the 38-year-old franchise's existence depends on a more favorable labor contract and a new arena.

As his career, Lemieux plans to keep playing once the NHL returns to the ice, despite missing 145 games due to injury over the last two seasons.

"I've done it before, taken a few years off, but it gets tougher and tougher, once you get closer to 40, to lose a year," said Lemieux, who turns 40 on October 17. "I'll prepare myself this summer to come back and play."

Quick fix? How about a 20-game season?

BY ASHLEY MCGEACHY

The Philadelphia Inquirer

PHILADELPHIA — Here's a suggestion for Gary Bettman, Bob Goodenow and the rest of the National Hockey League: Play a 20-game season.

This year. Next year. Every year.

On Wednesday, the NHL canceled its season, a sad, inevitable event after 154 days of a lockout based on — what else — the almighty dollar. Instead of compromising on a salary cap, hockey has forfeited an insane amount of money, financially crippling the league, the teams and the players as well as local businesses and their workers.

Concessionaires, sporting goods merchants, bar, restaurants and vendors, whose livelihoods revolve around hockey, may have been devastated.

When Bettman and Goodenow reopen their negotiations and talk about next season, they should immediately agree to trim the 82-game play by 62. Start training camp the day after the Super

Commentary

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Bowl, when a void the size of California hits sports fans. Have it last a week. Then

bring on the games. Fans are angry, but as baseball's brood taught us after the strike of 1994, most are fickle as long as there's a hook. For America's pastime, that hook was the compelling, if not suspicious (wink, wink, Jose Canseco), home run drive in 1998 between Mark McGwire and Sammy Sosa. Fans watched the gripping assault on Roger Maris' record and in the process rediscovered their love of baseball and subsequently returned to the ballpark's having forgotten, if not forgotten.

Hockey needs a hook. Think of the ramifications of a shortened season. Every game would have major consequences — it does in the NHL, doesn't it? — and therefore generate a play-off type atmosphere every night. Fans would pack the arenas (cha-ching) to see vicious checks and masterful goaltending and

frenetic offense, and the teams that really were dedicated to winning would be compelled to stack their rosters with the best players available.

The Washington Capitals and Panthers and Pittsburgh Penguins can't afford to pay big bucks to be competitive? Fine. Their fans wouldn't have to suffer through 82 games of heartbreak.

The agony would be over quicker. Aside from a small group of hard-core hockey fans and the sportswriters assigned to cover the league, who in the United States really cares about hockey in November and December? Or, to be fair, about the NBA?

The end of the year is about football, football and more football. High schools are playing for state titles. The college season is wrapping up, with teams vying for conference championships and players making cases for the Heisman Trophy. And the NFL season is in full bloom, with teams challenging for the Vince Lombardi Trophy.

Did anyone in Philadelphia really miss the Flyers while the Eagles were pushing toward the

Super Bowl? Maybe a few people did, but not me.

On Monday, after getting home from Jacksonville, Fla., I would have watched a little hockey. Not before.

To make things more entertaining, the NHL should do away with annoying ties. A tie does nothing for the fans but leave them with an unsatisfying moral victory.

Instead of allowing a game to end in a tie, have a maximum of two 15-minute overtime periods. If the score is still tied, move to a sudden-death shootout. One shot for victory. That would be must-see TV.

While they're at it, Bettman and Goodenow should consider other changes. Widen the rink. Expand the goal. Severely punish fighting. Play four-on-four.

Do anything you can to promote offense, because while there are purists who appreciate a defensive battle, the casual fan loves scoring. After Wednesday's announcement that the NHL will have to recruit fans back to the game, and that will probably mean attracting new fans.

no free chicken as Illinois cruises

BY DAN GELSTON

The Associated Press

STATE COLLEGE, Pa. — The rally towels were on every seat and a local restaurant promised free chicken wings for every fan if Penn State could pull off an upset of top-ranked Illinois.

By the end, those towels may as well have been white flags, and no one was eating any more than a concession stand hot dog.

Roger Powell Jr., went 10-for-10 from the field and scored 21 points and De Brown added 19 points to lead No. 1 Illinois to its 26th straight victory, 83-63 over Penn State on Wednesday night.

Illinois (12-0, 12-0 Big Ten) topped the school record of 25 consecutive victories set over three seasons from February 1914 to February 1916.

"Streaks aren't important," Illinois coach Bruce Weber said. "Winning the Big Ten, getting the high seed, advancing March into April is what's important. But at the same time, you've got to feel proud about what you've accomplished."

Penn State (7-17, 1-10) was just another easy victim, falling to 0-10 against top-ranked teams.

Geary Claxton led the Nittany Lions with 19 points, the only player with a double figures.

Illinois was the first top-ranked team to play at the 9-year-old Bryce Jordan Center and the first to visit State College since Indiana in 1993. In that one, coach Bob Knight and the Hoosiers



Illinois' James Augustine beats Penn State's Ben Luber to a loose ball during the top-ranked Fighting Illini's 83-63 win over the Nittany Lions.

needed two overtime to escape with a 88-84 victory.

Twelve years later, there was no such excitement for the home crowd.

Illinois was simply too quick, too talented and too deep to let a team like Penn State even come close — no matter how hard the Nittany Lions tried to prepare in practice.

"For me, it's like going to my first hockey game. I never appreciated the speed of the puck until I saw hockey in person for the first time," Penn State coach Ed DeChellis said. "I can kind of equate it with what we saw tonight. They're very, very fast and you can't simulate in practice what we saw tonight."

The Illini scored the first seven

points, then Brown had two straight steals, turning one into a fast-break layup and another into a nifty assist for Luther Head, and the blowout was on. Deron Williams and Brown hit consecutive three-pointers for a 38-19 lead and the Illini cruised to a 52-30 halftime advantage.

"I think we broke their spirit down the stretch in the first half," Weber said.

Powell made all eight of his shots in the first half, when Brown had 10 of his 11 assists.

"We could have played harder and come out with more intensity on defense," Claxton said.

Powell shook off a four-game slump (8-for-21 shooting) and matched his season high for points.

"It was good to make some baskets, but the guards set me up," Powell said.

Head finished with 16 points and Illinois (12-0, 12-0) won on three-pointers while extending its record winning streak to 13 games, best in the nation.

"They're so unselfish. That's how basketball should look," Penn State guard Mike Walker said.

Illinois would have it no other way. In the first half, the Illini had 19 assists on 22 baskets and finished with 27 assists overall on 34 baskets.

"We moved the ball, we pushed it," Weber said. "Our guys came to play."

Virginia's slower pace can't stop Carolina

The Associated Press

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. — Rashad McCants shrugged off his recent poor shooting, only 20 percent on three-pointers over the previous five games. After all, North Carolina won four of those games, right?

"I really wasn't out there worrying about that," McCants said. "I was actually thinking about the team."

McCants had 23 points and Sean May added 17 points and 16 rebounds, helping the fourth-ranked Tar Heels pull out an 85-61 victory over Virginia on Wednesday night.

Jawad Williams and Raymond Felton each scored 12 points for the Tar Heels (21-3, 9-2 ACC), who had won within one-half game of first place Wake Forest in the Atlantic Coast Conference. McCants had a season-high six assists as North Carolina won for seven consecutive games.

"I was happy to see Rashad make a bunch of shots," North Carolina coach Roy Williams said. "I never lost confidence in him in my second year."

With both teams celebrating "Throwback Night" — they donned retro uniforms based on 1980s designs — the Cavaliers (13-4-0) might have taken it a bit too literally. They continued their slowdown tactics started earlier this month by coach Pete

Men's Top 25 Roundup

Gillen, holding the ball on nearly every possession while the shot clock wound down.

It was a bit reminiscent of the 1982 ACC championship game, when the Tar Heels beat the Cavaliers 47-45 after stalling for the final 7½ minutes. That game — with players such as Michael Jordan, James Worthy and Ralph Sampson on the court — is generally credited with forcing the eventual implementation of the shot clock.

The slower style certainly has worked for Gillen, who led Virginia in out of the conference cellar with three straight victories.

"It's the first time we've lost in four games, so you can't argue with it," said Virginia guard Gary Forbes, who had 23 points on 8-for-11 shooting.

Still, it ultimately failed even though the Cavaliers started much closer than in the earlier matchup this season, a 110-76 Carolina blowout.

No. 6 Boston College 74, Rutgers 64: Sean Marshall scored 22 points and Jared Dudley had 14 points and 12 rebounds for the Eagles (21-1, 10-1 Big East), who were playing for the first time since losing at Notre Dame on Feb. 8.

Ricky Shields scored 16 points for the visiting Scarlet Knights (8-14, 2-10).

No. 11 Michigan St. 81, Minnesota 62: Shannon Brown had 18 points and Maurice Ager added 16 for the Spartans (18-4, 9-2 Big Ten), who have won 15 of 17, the last four by double figures. Vincent Grier had 19 points for the visiting Golden Gophers (16-9, 6-6).

No. 16 Alabama 72, Arkansas 63: Chuck Davis scored 16 of his 21 points in the second half and the Crimson Tide (20-4, 9-2 Southeastern Conference) won 20 for the second straight season.

Jonathon Modica scored 16 points for the visiting Razorbacks (17-8, 5-7), who had a three-game winning streak snapped.

No. 19 Pacific Tr. UC Santa Barbara 56: Guillaume Yang scored 16 points and the Tigers (21-2, 15-0) clinched the Big West regular-season title with their 17th straight victory overall and 28th in a row in conference play.

Joe See and Alex Harris each scored 16 points for the Gauchos (8-14, 5-8).

No. 20 Wisconsin 76, Michigan 50: Mike Wilkinson had 22 points and nine rebounds for the Badgers (17-6, 8-4 Big Ten), who swept Michigan for the first time since 1979.

Courtney Sims scored 16 points for the visiting Wolverines (12-14,

3-9), who matched a school record with their ninth straight loss. The last time Michigan lost nine in a row was the final eight games in 1965-67 and the opener the following season.

No. 21 Oklahoma 83, Nebraska 60: Terrell Everett scored 18 points for the Sooners (18-6, 7-4 Big 12), who snapped a three-game losing streak. Oklahoma had lost four of five after a 10-game winning streak.

Joe McCray had 21 points for Nebraska (11-1, 4-7), which has lost seven straight to Oklahoma.

No. 23 Charlotte 66, DePaul 62: Curtis Withers scored 18 points for the 49ers (18-4, 9-2 Conference USA), who won at home in their first game in six years as a ranked team.

Drake Diener tied a school record with seven three-pointers and had 25 points for the Blue Demons (16-6, 8-3). His last three tied 62-62 with 56 seconds left, but Brendan Plavich made three free throws in the final half-minute to clinch it.

No. 24 Cincinnati 83, Southern Mississippi 51: Jason Marklund scored 20 points and Eric Hicks had 18 points and 12 rebounds for the host Bearcats (19-6, 7-4 Conference USA), who had a 44-19 rebound advantage. Rashad Carruth scored 16 points for Southern Miss (10-14, 1-11), which has lost six in a row for the second time this season.

N.C. State rolls over Maryland

BY AARON BEARD

The Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — North Carolina State's fleet-footing hopes of reaching the NCAA tournament have come down to a handful of games.

Ilan Evtimov and Tony Bethel each scored 17 points Wednesday night to lift the Wolfpack to an 82-63 victory over No. 22 Maryland, earning its first regular-season sweep in the series since the 1988-89 season.

Julius Hodge added 13 points and nine assists for the Wolfpack (15-10, 5-7 Atlantic Coast Conference), who led by 20 in the first half and held on for their first home victory over Maryland in five years.

It was a desperately needed victory for the Wolfpack, who opened 10-1, then lost 11 of 12 to jeopardize a bid for a fourth straight NCAA tournament bid.

N.C. State was coming off a 53-51 victory at Georgia Tech, and the national ranking run-up. The Wolfpack played three of their final four games at home — though two were against No. 4 North Carolina and No. 5 Wake Forest — and had the chance to correct a season gone awry.

"We're very confident," Evtimov said. "We also know that we don't have any room for error right now. We want to have a postseason — anything — we've got to play hard and we've got to try to win every game we can. We've lost any kind of margin for error we've ever had."

N.C. State knows it will need more efforts like the one against the Terrapins (15-8, 6-6), who were coming off an overtime victory over No. 7 Duke.

N.C. State played unselfishly on offense, choosing crisp passing over 1-on-1 basketball to get open shots. The Wolfpack had 13 three-pointers — many coming on kickouts from the post or off penetration — and finished with 22 assists on 25 field goals.

Volleyball coach went 19-for-21 at the free-throw line, where the team has shot just 69 percent this season.

"We played well offensively, many good plays and we were hitting on all cylinders," N.C. State coach Herb Sendek said.

Maryland coach Gary Williams was displeased with his team, which had beaten the Blue Devils 99-92 in overtime over the weekend to earn its first sweep of Duke in a decade.

"I guess we were feeling pretty good about ourselves," Williams said. "I guess they made us pay (the Duke win) as a springboard to the next game."

Nick Caner-Medley scored 17 of his 19 points in the first half to lead the Terps, but got little help and didn't hit a field goal after halftime.

Maryland led 20-19 after a three-pointer by Caner-Medley, but the Wolfpack answered with a 25-4 run to take control.

Tiger looking to start streak, end their's

Woods pursues first Nissan Open victory as Canadian goes for No. 3

BY DOUG FERGUSON
The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Tiger Woods can't win at Riviera.

Mike Weir just can't seem to lose. Woods made his PGA Tour debut in the Nissan Open as a 16-year-old amateur and missed the cut two straight years. Once he turned pro, the results only slightly improved.

The fabled course on Sunset Boulevard is the only PGA Tour stop he has played at least four times without winning.

"No doubt about it, I'd like to win," Woods said Wednesday. "Hopefully, this will be the year."

Weir played the Nissan Open for the first time as a PGA Tour rookie in 1998 and promptly missed the cut the first four times out. But the Canadian eventually figured it out.

Now, he sets out Thursday trying to become the first player in the 79-year history of the tournament to win three straight times.

Of the other five repeat champions, only Ben Hogan won three straight at Riviera—the last was the 1948 U.S. Open.

"Usually in the big scheme of things, I don't look at records too much," Weir said. "But I thought about this one. This would be a pretty cool one. This course has a lot of



Tiger Woods watches his drive on the ninth hole at Riviera Country Club in Los Angeles as he plays in the Pro-Am round of the Nissan Open on Wednesday.

history. I'd like to add a little piece of it I could."

Despite a sluggish start to his season, Weir looked poised to do that.

Four days ago, he at least gave Phil Mickelson something to think about in the final round at Pebble Beach with one of the best

ball-striking rounds of the year. Ten shots back, Weir closed the gap to four before Mickelson steadied himself to win by that margin.

In cold, wet and breezy conditions, Weir hit every fairway and missed only one green.

"I didn't play very well until the last week, so that was a big confidence boost to play well there in those conditions, and come in here with some good confidence on a course that I like."

The former Masters champion doesn't have a method for winning at Riviera.

Weir made up a seven-shot deficit in the final round two years ago by closing with a 5-under 66 to get into a playoff against Charles Howell II, then beat him on the second extra hole.

Last year, Weir took a five-shot lead into the final round and threw it all away on the back nine thanks to a tremendous charge by Shigeki Maruyama. But just when the Canadian was headed for a collapse, he nearly chipped in from the side of the hill on the 18th green and won by a shot.

"Even from the first time I played Riviera, I loved the golf course," Weir said. "The first couple of years, I never played well there, but I thought it was the type of course that set up well for my game. Just the way the course is shaped, you have to use your imagination out there."

"It took me a couple of years to get a handle on it, but I like the place."

Woods and Weir are the only players entered from the world's top 10.

Open champion Retief Goosen was supposed to play, but didn't get a wake-up call

Wednesday morning and missed his pro-am time. Under the PGA Tour's policy, players cannot be in a tournament if they don't take part in the pro-am.

Woods is coming off a three-week break. With Vijay Singh missing the cut at Pebble Beach and taking this week off, Woods only has to finish fourth to regain the No. 1 ranking Singh has held the last 24 weeks.

"The No. 1 ranking is really not that important to me. It's winning," Woods said. "Winning is how I get to No. 1 in the world... (how) Vijay got to be No. 1 in the world... and the guys behind us."

"You have to win. I have started to put together some wins here. It's been really cool, and hopefully I can continue that trend."

Woods has won three of his last four stroke-play tournaments, including the unofficial Target World Challenge.

His record at the Nissan Open shows top-10 finishes the last two years, but only because Woods closed with rounds of 64 and 65 after he was no longer a factor in the tournament that has become his Achilles' heel.

Sam Snead never won the U.S. Open. Arnold Palmer never won a PGA Championship. Jack Nicklaus never won the Canadian Open despite seven runner-up finishes. And then there's Woods and his hometown tournament.

"I have some great memories, some nervous memories," he said.

"It's just been great over the years to see the same people out here. It's basically my hometown. So to see my friends out here, it's very special event."

For it to be extra special, he might have to seek the advice of Weir.

Headaches send Bruschi to hospital

The Associated Press

BOSTON — New England Patriots linebacker Teddy Bruschi spent the night in Massachusetts General Hospital after complaining of headaches and was scheduled for testing Thursday.

Bruschi, 31, was in good condition Wednesday night, said team spokesman Stacey James, who had no update Thursday morning.

Bruschi, a 6-foot-1, 247-pound, nine-year NFL veteran, is a key member of New England's defense that has helped the team win three of the past four Super Bowls, including a 24-21 win over the Philadelphia Eagles on Feb. 6.

"The Bruschi family appreciates everyone's concern, but requests that you respect their privacy at this time," the team said in a statement Wednesday.

The team expects to receive an update later Thursday, James said.

A spokeswoman for Massachusetts General Hospital referred all questions to the Patriots.

Bruschi, selected in the third round of the 1996 draft out of Arizona, was second on the team in sacks during the regular season with 122, behind only safety Rodney Harrison with 138. He also had 3.5 sacks and three interceptions during the regular season.

He had two fumble recoveries in the team's 20-3 divisional play-

off win over the Indianapolis Colts Sunday, an interception in the Super Bowl.

He has 753 tackles, 25 sacks and 11 interceptions in his career. He also played in last weekend's Pro Bowl in Hawaii.

Titans' Williams arrested

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Titans safety Tank Williams was arrested early Thursday and charged with driving under the influence after a police officer saw his vehicle make a rolling stop at a downtown intersection.

The 24-year-old strong safety smelled of alcohol, had red and watery eyes and registered 0.08 percent when his breath was tested, the police affidavit said. That's the minimum blood-alcohol reading for intoxication under Tennessee law.

Titans spokesman Robbie Bohren confirmed the arrest and said the club is gathering more information before commenting.

A first-time DUI conviction can be punished with a one-year suspension of the driver's license, a fine between \$350 and \$1,500 and jail time ranging from two days to a year.

Fowler's bio updated to fix inaccurate claims

MINNEAPOLIS — A public relations firm representing prospective Minnesota Vikings owner Reggie Fowler issued a revised "fact sheet" on Fowler Wednesday after questions were raised about the accuracy of an official biography.



New England Patriots linebacker Teddy Bruschi plays with his son, T.J., 4, before Super Bowl XXXIX. Bruschi was hospitalized in Boston on Wednesday after complaining of headaches.

Fowler's original bio claimed he played in the NFL and CFL and in the Little League World Series as a 11-year-old, and implied that he earned a business administration and management degree from the University of Wyoming.

The Star Tribune reported Wednesday that the claims were incorrect or overstated. Fowler, a former University of Wyoming linebacker, never made it out of an NFL training camp and doesn't appear in player databases for either league.

The new sheet includes no Little League mention and clarifies his degree was in social work. It clarifies that Fowler attended training camp with the Cincinnati Bengals, but still includes playing in 1983 for the CFL's Calgary Stampeders.

NBA changing beer sales policies in wake of brawl

The Associated Press

DENVER — The NBA is issuing guidelines to limit the size and number of beers sold at basketball games and have teams announce what type of fan behavior is considered unacceptable, league Commissioner David Stern said.

The new league-wide security regulations, taking effect next week, are an attempt to prevent another brawl like the November ruckus at a Detroit Pistons-Indiana Pacers game.

They will cover such topics as the number of security officers teams should employ, as well as their tactics and placement in the arenas, Stern told. The Denver Post for a story published Thursday.

The league office could penalize teams that do not adhere to the guidelines, and fans who become unruly "might not see the end of the game," Stern told the Post.

"We are not looking to eject fans," he said. "We look at this as an opportunity to remind people that coming to an arena is an opportunity to share an experience of rooting a home team on to victory and booing the opposition, but not doing it in an anti-social way that goes against our civil society."

Many NBA teams are already meeting the new standards, Stern said.

The policies are to go into effect after the All-Star break. The Denver All-Star Game is set for Sunday in Denver.

Five Indiana Pacers players

Briefs

and seven fans were charged in the Nov. 19 melee at the Palace of Auburn Hills, Mich. Players went into the stands after a fan threw a full cup of beer at the Pacers' Ron Artest.

Stoudemire to join dunk contest; James undecided

DENVER — Phoenix Suns forward Amare Stoudemire will take part in Saturday's NBA slam dunk contest during All-Star weekend, but LeBron James is still making up his mind.

James, a starter for the Eastern Conference in Sunday's All-Star game, was not one of the four players who committed Wednesday to compete in the contest. He has a standing invitation to the NBA, but said he might take until Friday to decide.

"It is a yes or no answer," said James, who has been pressed about a decision nearly every day for the past few weeks. "I just haven't decided if I'll do it or not. I know me, I'm a last-minute person."

Stoudemire, a Western Conference All-Star, also competed during his rookie season in 2003 when he finished third. Atlanta rookie Josh Smith, and New Orleans' Chris Andersen and rookie J.R. Smith round out the field.

Andersen took part in last year's contest, but did not advance past the first round.



SPORTS



Finally back on his game,
Woods seeks No. 1 ranking and
a breakthrough at Riviera, Page 29



Detroit's Joe Louis Arena will not host NHL games this season after the only cancellation of an entire season in North American pro sports history.

Possibilities abound amid intensifying turmoil

BY THOMAS HEATH AND
TARIK EL-BASHIR
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — When National Hockey League Commissioner Gary Bettman formally canceled the 2004-05 season on Wednesday, the league became the first major professional sport in North America to lose an entire season over labor problems, driving speculation on where the 88-year-old NHL goes from here and whether it can even survive.

The flurry of meetings and phone calls over the past few weeks between the union and NHL owners failed to stop the downward spiral that began with

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Possible scenarios

- The NHL declares an impasse and resumes play next season with replacement players who operate under an owner-specified salary cap. This would likely prompt the players to strike.
- The players' union goes to court or the U.S. National Labor Relations Board to challenge the impasse, even though the NLRB has no jurisdiction over the NHL's five Canadian teams. Under a successful challenge, the union could prevent the league from resuming play, possibly forcing more negotiations and lengthening the dispute.
- The union dissolves and players bring an anti-trust action against the owners for collusion, a tactic NFL players successfully used in 1989.
- The players or a media mogul start a league to replace the NHL.

By The Washington Post

the owners' lockout of players five months ago, which had wiped out 830 of the 1,230 regular-season games. Now the game heads into uncharted territory.

"I know of nothing analogous to this ... one of the big, professional major sports losing an entire sea-

son," said Stan Kasten, former president of the NHL Atlanta Thrashers. "One thing I know is that there will be grave consequences that are long-lasting. It's inevitable."

The league shut down Sept. 15, when the NHL's 30 owners, tired

of what they said were intolerable financial losses, locked the doors to arenas and practice facilities until the players agreed to a cost structure that would rein in salaries. Now that it appears those doors won't reopen any sooner than the fall, the question becomes, "What's next?"

"There are all kinds of scenarios people are talking about, but they involve such drastic steps that it's hard to predict whether they will actually take them," said Gary Roberts, a former anti-trust attorney for the NFL who now teaches law at Tulane University.

Many predict that the league will make the next move by declaring an impasse and resuming play next season with replace-

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Penguins owner/player Mario Lemieux believes the NHL's future in Pittsburgh relies on a labor agreement that provides cost certainty.

Lemieux has rare view of impasse

BY ALAN ROBINSON
The Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — There never was any doubt where hockey's biggest name stood in the NHL lockout.

These days, Mario Lemieux is the Pittsburgh Penguins' owner first and a player second, not the other way around.

Lemieux was captain of Team Canada when it won the World Cup in September but has said repeatedly the NHL has no choice but to negotiate a more favorable labor contract — even if such a deal might trim his own salary.

The only other option, he said, is to risk losing hockey in Pittsburgh and other smaller cities, where fans are weary of subsidizing big salaries in what is becoming a niche sport largely ignored by the masses.

That's why Lemieux was hopeful until minutes before Commissioner Gary Bettman

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surging Iverson in
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